



City of Westminster

Black History in Westminster.

Black History Month is an international event and has been celebrated in the UK every October for over 22 years; celebrating the lives, achievements and positive contribution made to our country by black and minority ethnic communities.

Westminster has thousands of visitors every year from all around the world and today over 30% of Westminster residents are from black and minority ethnic communities, with over 150 different languages spoken in our city.

Westminster has a wealth of cultural history and should be known not just for its heritage and historic buildings but for the way it enables people of different backgrounds with common aspirations to build families, careers and lives together.

This booklet provides an insight into the rich culture of Westminster, from its many art galleries and theatres to shopping, fashion and restaurants. It also profiles the contribution of some of the gifted and influential black figures of Westminster; in history up to the present-day.

I very much hope you enjoy celebrating Black History Month.

Councillor Colin Barrow
Leader of Westminster City Council





the government. Claudia Jones was also instrumental in launching the Notting Hill Carnival, one of Europe's largest street festivals, attracting visitors from around the world, which includes

the Harrow Road and the Westbourne area of Westminster. The Notting Hill Carnival takes place every year over the August Bank Holiday and is a great opportunity to see wonderful hand-made costumes and spectacular steel bands. Claudia Jones died in 1964 aged 49 of tuberculosis and a heart condition.

Photo shows Claudia Jones talking to reporters outside the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London – August 1963.

Claudia Jones

Claudia Jones was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1915 and arrived in Britain in 1955. A prominent activist campaigning for black people's rights in Britain she founded the West Indian Gazette, Britain's first black newspaper. When race riots broke out in London's Notting Hill in 1958, Jones defended the black communities by joining a committee that represented their interests to

Yaa Asantewaa Centre

The Yaa Asantewaa Centre opened in 1986 and adopted the name of Queen Mother Yaa Asantewaa (1850-1921) of the Asante (Ashanti) people of Ghana, who led the heroic struggle to maintain her people's national integrity and ancient cultural heritage. Today the Yaa Asantewaa hosts many community groups including the United West Indian Association of British Calypsonians (ABC), the Association of Portuguese in England (API) and the Djembe Drummers.

Located in the north of the city, Yaa Asantewaa has been

instrumental in the running of the Notting Hill carnival, hosting the major prize-winning design team for almost every carnival arts category: choreography, costume, bands, and individuals. In the run-up to carnival the Yaa Asantewaa centre also hosts the London Calypso Tent. Yaa Asantewaa also runs a number of youth projects each year which form part of their broad educational programme. Over the years, the centre has provided the incubating venue for a number of established black British artists.

For further information visit: www.yaacentre.com



Did you know...

Every year over 1 million people attend the Notting Hill Carnival over a 2 day period.

Photo: Lucy Woodier



"The duties of a registrar may be seen as simple but it can be emotional and requires a high level of sensitivity."

Patricia Z Gordon
Registrar of Births and Deaths and Deputy Superintendent Registrar Nationality Checking

Patricia currently holds the post of Deputy Superintendent Registrar in Westminster.

She was born in the Parish of St Mary, Jamaica and came to the UK in 1965, aged 15 settling in Peckham, South London with her parents. Her career in Westminster began in 1981 in the Social Services Department as an administrator in Adult Services. Patricia quickly progressed and became Deputy Registrar in the same year. She then became a Registrar in Marriages in 1986, the first black person to hold such a position in Westminster.

With over 24 years service, Patricia has seen thousands of people visiting her offices from all walks of life. She performs an essential service in the community, issuing people with important legal documents that they will rely on for the rest of their life. Amongst her day-to-day duties of registering

marriages, births and deaths she also carries out civil ceremonies, citizenship ceremonies, nationality checking, marriages in hospitals and homes, and the registering of stillbirths.

One of the privileges of her post include registering the births of children of a number of famous personalities including Annie Lennox, Rod Steward, Liam Gallagher, Heather Smalls, Gary Beadle, Claudia Schiffer, Helena Bonham Carter and Emma Thompson.

Patricia's hobbies include cooking and gardening. She has three children and nine grandchildren.

To find out more about the registrar services visit:
[www.westminster.gov.uk/
 communityandliving/registrar](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/communityandliving/registrar)

"One of the highlights of my career was marrying my daughter Naddine in Jamaica in 2004."

Paul Canoville***Professional footballer***

Born in Southall to Caribbean parents in 1962, Paul Canoville's career in football started with Hillingdon FC. In 1981 he signed with Chelsea FC, becoming their first black player. This was both an enjoyable and difficult time, having to deal with constant racial abuse from fans and members of his own team. Paul went on to play for Chelsea for five years and was sold to Reading in 1986 where he sustained a cartilage injury. Following his injuries, he attempted a comeback playing for non-league teams such as Enfield, Maidenhead United and Burnham but was forced to retire at 27. Paul's triumph over adversity was also encountered when he was diagnosed with non – Hodgkin's Lymphoma, an aggressive form of cancer from which he successfully made a full recovery. In 2008 he wrote his frank and honest biography, *Black and Blue*, outlining his football career, which won him the award for Best Sports Author in 2009.

Paul began working with children through library workshops organised by the Archives Centre and is now an assistant teacher in Westminster.

www.westminster.gov.uk/archives



Photo: Awasi Tawia Poku

"Football is a great game but you may not make it in the game. Have a back-up plan. Education is a must – without that you could be left stranded."



HE'S THINKING ABOUT YOU TOO

Ever thought about adoption? Westminster City Council needs adoptive parents from black and mixed heritage backgrounds.

**Register for our information evening
on 12th November 2009.**

Call **020 7641 4080**

Visit **www.westminster.gov.uk/adoption**

adoption



City of Westminster
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Further information

If you would like additional copies of this booklet or have any comments or suggestions, please send your comments to:

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www.westminster.gov.uk/bhmevents