

The Nottingham Carnival Heritage Project

Background information about the project

Carnival heritage is the extraordinary story that has been developed well over forty years of Nottingham Caribbean Carnival and its relationship to interface with the development of the Caribbean community in Nottingham over this period.

The heritage is both the story, and the objects, documents, images, moving image, press cuttings and recorded oral history that tell that story. Some of the people who can tell the story are now elderly and there is a limited window of opportunities to capture and record their voice.

The story of the development of Carnival and of the Caribbean community in Nottingham is one of achievement against the odds, challenge, checkered-history and significant input from a number of key influential people such as William Stewart and Leroy Wallace and others. Race riots were the climate against which the first parade was organised and through the next four decades there were ongoing challenges that threatened to stop the delivery of Nottingham Carnival. A few of these key individuals are still alive and able to tell their story.

There is much oral history to identify, capture and record and the story of Carnival development encompasses the stories of migration from and settling in Nottingham from many widely different Caribbean Islands and the different influences that brought different approaches to Carnival and a different approach to custodianship.

The most felt need of the project is to tell the positive story of carnival and its Caribbean cultural celebration which will reinforce the role carnival can play in creating community cohesion and harmony at a time when there was great racial unrest in Britain.