

CELEBRATE! 50 YEARS OF THE LEEDS WEST INDIAN CARNIVAL

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A photo-led book with a history by Max Farrar of the carnival in Leeds

Introduction

Thousands of people have contributed to the 50 years of Leeds West Indian Carnival. The photographs and text in this book celebrate the art, creativity and sheer hard work in making this extraordinary festival of joy take place in August, every year since 1967. As city leaders have increasingly come to recognise, the Leeds West Indian Carnival is an emblem of all that is best about this great city.

The book is a testimony to the energy and imagination of the people who came to Leeds from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 60s. They brought with them their education, training and in some cases their professional qualifications. They countered the racism they experienced with both political and artistic flair. They demonstrated, and they jammed. As Arthur France MBE, the driving force in the first carnival and ever since, has explained, they wanted to donate to this city the rich cultural tradition of art, design and performance that had been forged under colonial rule in the Caribbean, drawing on their African roots.

This tradition contained music and dance, costume-making and song, and above all it expressed conviviality, community and pleasure. In welcoming the people who had settled in Leeds long before, it immediately brought diverse nationalities together. Carnival is a foundation stone in the multicultural city that Leeds is today. Its hospitality is an inspiration.

The chapters in this book explain some of the key moments in the life of the carnival in Leeds. They provide the names of lots of the key contributors to carnival, and a page in the book's Appendix lists many others. Our carnival took to the road on the August Bank Holiday Monday in 1967, and it has taken place at that time every year since then. On the previous Friday a competition is held for the Queen (and later the King) of each year's carnival. Leeds carnival is the first one in Europe to be organised entirely by British Caribbeans, and conducted in the form of the carnivals that the founders, Arthur France, Ian Charles, Calvin Beech, Tony Lewis, Willie and Rasheeda Robinson and others, had experienced at home in their Caribbean islands before they migrated to England.

The Caribbean carnival: a brief introduction

Carnival events in a Caribbean style were organised in London by Claudia Jones, a Trinidadian, exiled from the USA, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But these were held on indoor stages. Caribbean carnival bands formed one element of the fetes in the Notting Hill area of London organised from 1966 onwards, but the Notting Hill Carnival did not become a specifically Caribbean event until the 1970s. The Caribbean carnival in Britain today displays several of the traditional features established in Trinidad.

Carnival varies across the islands of the Caribbean, depending on how dominant were the settlers from Spain or from France. For the English-speaking Caribbean, it's the Trinidad carnival that has been most influential. In Trinidad, carnival can trace its roots to the brightly painted bands and the singing, stamping and roaring of the indigenous Caribs. Spanish colonists from the Sixteenth Century encouraged this singing, changing its name from Carieto to Cariso. The colonists

also introduced, from Europe, maypole dancing, cock-fighting and a wild form of wrestling, to the competitions between bands. The aristocrats among the French colonists in the late Eighteenth Century performed a 'masked' carnival, in which they adopted the costumes of classes and cultures other than their own. English colonists of the early Nineteenth century turned the carnival period (which coincided with Christmas) into bacchanalian drinking and disorder.

It's not entirely clear exactly when African traditions entered the carnival festivities, but Bryan Edwards' history of the English-speaking Caribbean between 1801 and 1819 records the presence of a Moco Jumbie, a masked figure on stilts with an 'antic terrible', common throughout West Africa. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, African-Caribbeans developed Cariso into mercilessly satirical, scandalous and often sexually explicit songs in English and Patois. (These songs are sometimes referred to as Kaiso and usually as Calypso.) The infusion of West African culture, which had perfected drumming, dancing and masking, went on apace, adding their musical instruments such as the banja and the maracas. In the 1840s and 50s, Trinidad's indentured workers imported from India brought their culture to the island too. Despite colonial opposition, their Hosay festival (with Tassa drummers and parading Tadjahs and dancing half-moons) eventually merged with the African and European elements.

The term 'Jumette Carnival' was introduced after Port of Spain's Canboulay riots of 1881. (Cannes boulés was French for the burning of the sugar cane.) 'Jumette' is derived from 'diametre', a reference to the people below the 'diameter' of respectability. The insurrectionary, bacchanalian aspect of carnival has meant that, until Trinidad and Tobago's independence from the British in 1962, it was either suppressed or condemned by the Trinidadian elites. Nevertheless, as a largely working class festival of satirical songs, parading, drinking, costume-making and music, carnival thrived in Port of Spain and all the other towns of Trinidad and Tobago. Steel Pans (invented in Trinidad) were introduced in 1937, and subsequently replaced the earlier iron and bamboo drumming equipment. Electric musical instruments were introduced from the 1960s.

The Leeds carnival

In Leeds today, the carnival exemplifies many of these roots. Costume making is displayed to its highest standard at the Carnival King and Queen Show on the Friday of the August Bank Holiday weekend. As the photos in this book show, men and women of all ages and heritages will appear before judges wearing and carrying costumes representing birds, coral reefs, Caribbean islands, butterflies, dragons and such like. Some will perform traditional characters like Moco Jumbie and Blue Devils. On the previous Sunday, girls and boys will have been on stage competing for the title of Carnival Prince or Carnival Princess, wearing smaller costumes of a similar type to those of the adult Kings and Queens.

For most of the 1970s and 1980s, the Queen Show would include 'Old Mas' (masquerade) in which local people would perform sketches, in costume, whose object was to lampoon the British authorities. Lord Silkie, The Godfather, and African Man would normally steal the show. These performances were abandoned in the 1990s, apparently because their humour didn't accord with the standards being set for comedy in contemporary culture. But this idea is to be found in the Carnival Monarch show on the Sunday night of the Bank Holiday, when men and women will compete for the honour of writing and performing the best satirical Calypso. J'Ouvert (or Juvay, 'the opening'), in the early morning of Bank Holiday Monday is a procession of people in their party clothes, or in their dressing gowns. It is reminiscent of the Canboulay parades (which, from the 1890s in Trinidad, were only allowed to start after 6am). From about 2pm on the Monday, the arena of Potternewton Park in Chapeltown fills with the Queen and King contestants, troupes (or mas bands) of anything from ten to 100 people in specially designed costumes on a particular theme, and others

in individual costumes. Troupes and Queens come to Leeds from all over the UK. Everyone will join the steel bands and Sound Systems on flat-bed trucks which are waiting on the adjacent road, Harehills Avenue. The Sound Systems will play MP3s, records and CDs of Soca — the music of the Caribbean carnival.

The crowds (dressed in the latest fashions or in specially designed masquerade costumes) that follow the lorry and its troupe will be exhorted to ‘jam’ or dance, reminding us of the ‘jamettes’ of the past. The parade replicates the major street procession of the Trinidad carnival. Some members of the procession are likely to be consuming alcohol, and some of them might even have started drinking on the previous Friday. Until recent years, at the Last Lap dance on the Monday night, a major Soca band, usually from Trinidad, but sometimes from other Caribbean islands with a Carnival tradition, would entertain the crowd with the fastest, sexiest music yet invented, and those bacchanalians who can still stand will jam the night away. Nowadays, after the troupes have performed their last dance on the stage in Potternewton Park, people will disperse home, or to one of the many ‘after-parties’ that will take place in Chapeltown or other parts of Leeds.

Leeds, 1967: the first West Indian Carnival in Europe

The origin of the Leeds’ carnival lies in a fete in 1966 at Kitson College (now the Technology Campus of Leeds City College) organised by two students, Frankie Davis (from Trinidad) and Tony Lewis (from Jamaica). One important feature of the Leeds carnival is that it recognises Trinidad’s leading role in starting this art form, but it brings all people of Caribbean heritage together. Tony Lewis was utterly committed to re-creating the carnival in Leeds, despite his origins in an island that has only recently embraced carnival. His friend Arthur France, a driving force in Leeds carnival since this period, has said: ‘Tony Lewis had no time for the stupid nationalism you sometimes find in some of the islands’. Throughout the history of the Leeds carnival, it has been pan-Caribbean. Leading figures, and participants, have originated in a variety of Caribbean islands, the majority, probably, being from St Kitts-Nevis.

At this first carnival fete, the British Soul band ‘Jimmy James and the Vagabonds’ played, Marlene Samlal Singh organised a troupe of people dressed as Red Indians (a familiar troupe costume in Trinidad) and Frankie Davis was so keen to bring carnival culture to Leeds that he wore his costume on the bus from Chapeltown to the town centre. The party ended at the British Council’s International House, off North Street.

Arthur France had suggested starting a carnival in 1966. He approached the United Caribbean Association (UCA), the organisation started in 1964 to represent the Leeds’ Caribbean populations, asking its committee for support, but it initially rejected the idea. Later, it set up a committee which did not deliver. Arthur France was one of the most radical members of the UCA, but he wanted to establish carnival in Leeds partly as a way of cooling off from politics, to have some fun amidst the often turbulent campaigns against racial discrimination that the UCA was compelled to launch.

To push his idea forward, Arthur France selected a new committee, one that he knew wanted a carnival for Leeds. This group included Calvin Beech, Ian Charles, Irwin and Rounica, Rose McAlister, Vanta Paul, Willie Robinson, Anson Shepherd, Samlal Singh, Ken Thomas and Wally Thompson. By 1967, the carnival preparations were underway. Ma Buck was centrally involved in the organising, and Ian Charles’ home in Manor Drive, Leeds 6, was turned into a factory (a Mas Camp) in which three costumes were produced, as was Samlal Singh’s home in Lunan Place, Leeds 8. (Ian, an engineer by profession, would leave Leeds for a week on site and come home to find his home so full of costume-makers that he could barely find somewhere to sleep.)

The first Queen Show was held in the Jubilee Hall, on Savile Place, off Chapeltown Road, Leeds 7. (This building subsequently became the Leeds Trades Council's headquarters and is now the Leeds Media Centre.) One of the judges was Mrs Daphne Steel, Britain's first black hospital matron. The Master of Ceremonies was Clive Alleyne, Britain's first black newscaster. Mr Allan Charles, the Trinidadian High Commissioner, attended. Samlal Singh's costume, The Sun Goddess, worn by Vicky Cielto, took first prize. Betty Bertie designed and made a costume called The Snow Queen, and Wally Thompson made one called The Gondola. Willie Robinson made Cleopatra, a costume worn by Gloria Viechwech, while the fifth costume was called The Hawaiian Queen. Artie Davis, performing as Lord Silkie, won the Calypso King competition with a song called 'Carnival is here to stay'. Silkie has been a carnival stalwart ever since (see The Cockspur Crew article on [page . . .](#))

The Gay Carnival Steel Band, which later became the Boscoe Steel Band, including Roy Buchanan, Rex Watley, Curtland, Dabbo, Tuddy, Vince, Clark, Desmond and others, played steel pan music in the procession that year, joined by the Invaders, also from Leeds (led by Prentice), the St Christopher Steel band from Birmingham, and another band from Manchester. Troupes on the road included the Cheyanne Indians (with Ian Charles as the Chief), the Fantasia Britannia troupe (led by Vanta Paul), the Sailors (organised by Willie Robinson), and Samlal Singh and Anson Shepherd produced a children's band. The procession wound its way from Potternewton park to the Leeds Town Hall in the city centre, where a crowd of about 1,000 people were entertained by a steel band competition judged by Junior Telford from London. Telford was a carnival pioneer who had brought the first Trinidadian steel band to Europe. Arthur France's troupe of Shionina Indians won the 'best troupe' award. That night, the Last Lap dance was held at the Leeds Town Hall. Telford took the news of Leeds carnival back to London, and the Leeds troupes were invited to attend the Notting Hill festival in 1968. They joined the other British Caribbeans in the multi-cultural Notting Hill gala that had been organised by Ms Rhuane Laslett since 1966. (See interview with Mrs Ellen Lewis on [page . . .](#))

In **1968** the Queen placed first in the contest was Gloria Simpson, in a costume called African Queen, designed by Roy Powers. In **1969**, Janet France was the winner. Her costume was called Out of Space and it was designed by Ian Gill.

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Reflections on the early days of Leeds Carnival, by Willie Robinson

When Arthur France suggested a carnival, many in the Westindian [sic] community in Chapeltown were delighted, yet felt that the authorities would never allow such an event to take place on the streets of a British city. Arthur was undaunted and persisted with his plan. Fortunately the senior police officers in the area had some vision and agreed to the idea. Even then many still doubted it would take place. As a measure of the insecurity of the Westindian community in Leeds, some still believed that those taking part would be arrested on the day.

I was privileged to serve on the first Leeds West Indian Carnival Development Committee. We had the task of staging a carnival without any finance. We appealed to the business community in Leeds for support. None was forthcoming. By our own fundraising and the generosity of many individuals from the community, the first of what is now an annual event and the forerunner of Westindian Carnivals in most of the major cities of England, became a reality. What started as a fun event, quickly became a vehicle of co-operation between Westindian organisations from Huddersfield, Birmingham, Manchester etc.

The first carnival queen show was a resounding success. The sight of the then Lord Mayor Leeds [Alderman Joshua Walsh] tapping his crutches to the beat of the steel band is still a vivid memory. August Bank Holiday Monday saw thousands of people of all races ‘jumping up’ together along the Headrow [in Leeds city centre] for the first time. Some visitors from London . . . were so impressed that they funded coaches to take us to their carnival [in Notting Hill].

It is fifteen years since I left Leeds but I occasionally return for some of the carnivals. I have also been to many carnivals in other parts of the country. Leeds’ Carnival is still the best organised one that I have been to. It continues to be an occasion of peaceful merriment. Long may it do so.

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“We didn’t know what we were getting into.”

Leeds Police Inspector Roy Exley told Max Farrar about giving permission for the first carnival to take over the streets of Leeds.



Arthur France (left) and Roy Exley (right) at the Leeds West Indian Centre in 1992.
Photo: Max Farrar

“I tell you what, we didn’t know what we were getting into here. I’d no idea what to expect.” Inspector Exley went to meet Arthur France and members of the United Caribbean Association at Arthur’s bed-sitter at 15 Grange Avenue [in Chapeltown, Leeds]. “It was clear from the enthusiasm that was present that this was going to be something, this carnival.”

Roy realised the it was going to attract a lot of people. “It was going to be, not a headache, but it would need policing, because of the traffic.” . . . He would admit that the whole affair was a bit of a surprise. “I’d just spent thirteen years with Barnsley Borough police, where the only black people were the people coming up from the pit [the coal mines], but I could see that it was going to be a very friendly atmosphere.”

Roy could see what was at the heart of the carnival. “It’s binding of the community together,” he said, “you get young people and old people working together.” He was very impressed on the day, with the enormous sense of occasion, all the spectators. All that troubled him was this “huge, moving crowd”, which made it difficult to allow traffic past.

“Everyone carried on with the liveliness, the spirit, it was ‘over the top’ if you like, people were intoxicated, but not with drink. The English don’t let themselves go like that at their summer fairs and parades. I’m sure I prefer gong to carnival than watching them,” Roy enthused. “Leeds is a cosmopolitan place and carnival helps bind all the communities together. It was a good way of black people meeting the police but not in a confrontational situation. It’s nice to think I was a member of the team that launched the first carnival.”

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“We laughed till we had to hold our stomach.”

Mrs Ellen Lewis told Max Farrar about the first carnival in Leeds

Mrs Lewis, like so many others, was roped into the first carnival by Arthur France. “We used to work at Burton’s [the tailoring factory in Harehills, Leeds] and Crab Juice [one of Arthur’s nicknames] asked us to enter. I’d never been to carnival before, but I always loved dancing. I could dance good and I was plenty younger then [she was 74 at the time of the interview]. Crab Juice told us we had to be in costume as Indians. We made the costume ourselves, with plaits,” she said.

The carnival even had an impact at Burton’s factory. “At Burton’s they used to have this hat thing, the best dressed hat, and I used my costume there.”

Her troupe was invited to take part in the Notting Hill carnival in 1968. “We went to London and it was during rain and we never had more joke, sometimes we had to hold our stomach. It was a bit cold at times, and some people had to take us and give us tea and clothes to put on. It was real good.”

At the Leeds carnival, “It was the music, there were old men playing steel bands, they were good, and you dance, man, you jump up, you dance.” But the long walk into town took its toll. [Until 1982, the carnival procession went from Chapeltown into the town centre and back again.]

“You used to be tired. I couldn’t go back to the night dance that they had. I take a soak and then lie down in my bed!”.

“You meet people you know in the street and you laugh with people. It was really nice. Everybody was happy. There are more white people involved now, and that is good, they join in, they dress up in whatever they want to make. The spectators enjoy it, you see them laughing and opening their windows and waving. Everybody is glad for that day to come.”

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1970s Carnivals

At the **1970** Carnival Queen Show, now in the Mecca Ballroom in the Merrion Centre in Leeds, the Master of Ceremonies was Trevor MacDonald (who became a famous television journalist). That year’s Carnival Queen was Jean Jeffers in a costume entitled Caribbean Sky at Night. It was designed by Calvin Beech. She was crowned by the previous year’s Queen, Janet France. *Yorkshire Life* magazine (October 1970) described the Leeds carnival as ‘The first West Indian Gala to be held in this country’. It estimated that ‘17,000 West Indians attended, dancing to steel bands flown in from Trinidad’. If that was the case then the following years saw some reduction in numbers. The procession is described as being ‘almost a quarter of a mile long’ and lasting for four hours. The August 1973 issue of *Chapelton News* showed photos of the Queen contestants for that year with an article that stressed that it was not a beauty contest. Ian Charles explained that the contestants would be judged on costume and originality, display, poise, audience impression, and on the personal evaluation of the judges.

In **1971** Yola Baptiste, in a costume called Peacock, designed by Cleve Watkins, took first prize. The MC again was Trevor MacDonald, at the start of his illustrious career. Trudy Maura was crowned Queen in **1972**. Her costume was titled Tears of the Indians, designed again by Cleve Watkins.

By **1973** Leeds carnival had made huge strides in its development. It had obtained the patronage of Lord and Lady Harewood, and the Queen contest was again staged in the magnificent Mecca Ballroom, on the evening of Thursday 23rd August. At the international conference on the Caribbean carnival held at Leeds Beckett University in 2017, Calvin Beech, a member of the founding carnival committee, explained that many on the committee objected to this move to a Thursday (the Friday was already booked). But they were eventually ‘steam rolled’. The Last Lap dance on the Monday was moved to Lipman Hall, one of Leeds University’s fine buildings.

At the Mecca Ballroom, Wilberforce Steel Band provided the music, Clifton Ali did a sketch, limbo dancers performed, Lord Silkie sang a calypso, and of course there was a parade of Queens. The Master of Ceremonies for the night was Mr Ken Sylvester. This list (from the carnival brochure for 1973) indicates who were the key makers of the Leeds carnival at this time:

- Miss LWISS: Miss Angelina Hall, sponsored by Leeds West Indian Student Society, in a costume designed and made by Ken Sylvester and Michael Paul.

- Miss Gillespie Brothers: Miss Rita Carambocas, sponsored by Gillespie Bros., in a costume designed and made by Miss Betty Bertie.
- Miss Huddersfield: Miss Maureen Allen, sponsored by Huddersfield West Indian Association, in a costume designed and made by V. Babb.
- Miss ADB: Miss Mouva Pinnock, sponsored by Huddersfield's African Descendants' Brotherhood, in a costume designed and made by Roy Knowle.
- Miss Cable and Wireless: Miss Venetta Webbe, sponsored by the Cable and Wireless Group, in a costume designed and made by Arthur France.
- Miss UCA: Miss Edris Browne, sponsored by the Leeds United Caribbean Association, in a costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor and James Browne.
- Miss Tetley: Miss Elise Paul, sponsored by Joshua Tetley (the brewers), in a costume designed and made by Kirby Thompson and Fred Rawlins.

Rita Carambocas took first place.

The contribution from Huddersfield, and the willingness of local businesses to sponsor the carnival shows how significant the Leeds carnival had already become.

In **1974**, Yvonne Ruddock won the competition in a costume designed and made by Edris Browne. At the Queen show, Leeds West Indian Dancers with the Rebel Daughters, the Zion Brothers and 'Young dancers from the Saturday class' joined the performers at the Mecca. Abdul Ali became the compère that year. 'The Saturday class' was a reference to the Supplementary School recently established by the United Caribbean Association to improve the educational standards of young people in Chapeltown.

In **1975**, the Queen Show was moved to the Chapeltown Community Centre on Reginald Terrace. Audrey Henry, in a costume titled Goddess of the Sea, designed and made by Alan Julien and Roy Powers, was the Queen of the carnival. In **1976** there was no Queen show, but there was a parade. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (3.9.1976) wrote: 'A taste of the Caribbean came to Leeds today [August Bank Holiday Monday] when a crowd of 5,000 paraded through the streets in colourful mardi gras costume. Three steel bands played non-stop calypso music during the three hour parade, which began and ended at Potternewton Park and took in Chapeltown Road, Eastgate, The Headrow and Meanwood Road'. In **1977** the Queen Show was held for the first time at Primrose Hill High School in Leeds 9. (The new school on that site is called The Co-Operative Academy.) The winning Queen costume was performed by Patricia Wilkes, designed by Hebrew Rawlins and Sheila Wilkes, and called Lands of the Fairy Tales. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* covered the 1977 Carnival procession on the Bank Holiday Monday with the headline 'Wonderful day, say police'. The opening paragraph reported that 'Leeds West Indian Carnival was last night said by police to have been a "wonderful day, and an example to other carnivals"'. The Notting Hill carnival on the previous Saturday had erupted in serious and widely-reported battles between Caribbean youth and the Metropolitan police. Ian Charles, who by now was the official Co-ordinator of the Carnival, was quoted as saying that there was no trouble in Leeds among the estimated 10,000 who gathered for the Carnival, because 'Unlike London, we set out to organise a one-day event with people taking part in a three-hour parade and then going home to rest and change before dancing at night. No-one has time to get tired, or restless, and the result is an enjoyable day out and brings different sections of the community together – our main aim. Everyone on the committee was impressed with the co-operation from the police'.

The *YEP*'s photographs for 1977 included one of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Patrick Crotty, someone who had always been supportive towards Chapeltown's educational and artistic activities, with the Jubilee Boys and Girls Dancing Team. While these included 6 year-old Shereena Browne, of Stonegate Terrace, Meanwood, Ruth Bunday, dazzlingly youthful, but no longer the age for the Boys and Girls dancing team, also finds her way into the photograph. (Ruth has been a

regular performer in the Leeds carnival for nearly 50 years.) The two other photographs include Arthur and ‘Braba’ France (her real name is Tattra) with their eight-month-old daughter Mahalia, and Yvonne Robinson (16), Yvonne Thomas (16) and Geraldine Robinson (10). In 1977 the Queen Show and the Last Lap Dance moved to Primrose Hill High School in Burmantofts. This was the venue for both events until the mid-1980s. There was no Queen Show in **1978** but there was a parade on the Bank Holiday Monday. In **1979** Hughbon Condor began his illustrious career as a winning designer/maker with a costume called The Morning Glory, worn by Maureen Williams.

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“We don’t care who wins.”

Mrs Eunice French told Max Farrar about her involvement in the Leeds carnival.



Mrs French in 1992. Photo: Max Farrar

Mrs Eunice French is a carnival stalwart. She first joined a troupe in 1978 and she has been in one every year since then. She has been in so many costumes she can’t remember them all. The ones she likes best are the Indians. “We have feathers and a plait. A dress like the Indians have with tassels and so forth. Sometimes we have face paint.”

Mrs French is in the troupe organised by Mrs Gloria Pemberton — the one that regularly wins the prize for having the most members and best costumes. Before she came to England, Mrs Pemberton was involved in the carnival which is held at Christmas in St Kitts. Mrs French lived in the countryside of St Kitts, so she was not involved, but she would go into the town [Basseterre] to watch the carnival.

She and a number of others help Irma Frederick, Mrs Pemberton’s niece, make up the costumes in Irma’s house, which becomes a small factory in the weeks leading up to carnival. Few people realise how much time goes into making the costumes. “It takes as long a time as you give them,” she says, smiling. For two to three weeks before the carnival, as many as six people will

spend three or four hours every evening making costumes. At the end all the children will come in and help finish the decoration of the costumes.

She says: "I enjoy doing it. We are all there together making jokes and laughing as we make the costumes. I like the carnival day. We dance and jump up. Everybody eats and we drink and dance with the music. I know all the people. I do it for the enjoyments. We don't care who wins, just that we enjoy ourselves on the day. I'll carry on for as long as I can go."

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1980s Carnivals

The winner of the Queen contest in **1980** was Pat Powell. Her costume, Eve in the Garden of Eden, was designed and made by Edris Browne. For the **1981** carnival, Abdul Ali was still the compère, and in the parade the ever-reliable Wilberforce Steel Band (including Rex, Joe, Alf, Let, Amos, Tuddy Richards, Skip and Wilton) were pulled, like the other pan bands, on the wheeled platform along the road while playing their pans. This was heavy and exhausting labour, using dozens of willing hands. The winning Queen was Cavell Browne in another Hughbon Condor design called Eastern Delight. In **1982** Susan Pitter and Reggie Challenger became the compères for the evening. The events on the night were now more extensive than before. As well as the Queen contest, the show included Mackie's Disco playing the records, a carnival slideshow and film, the Sustain dancers (directed by Gloria Pemberton [see interview on page ...]), Paul 'Quincy' Eubanks doing a comedy show, Addison Phillips and his singing group with guitars, 'Old Mas' satirical sketches, the Bazzard Players, Mr and Mrs Sketch, Lord Silkie and other calypsonians and the Boscoe Steel Band providing live pan music. By now, support had arrived from public sector bodies such as Leeds City Council, Leeds Education Department, the Commission for Racial Equality, Yorkshire Arts Association and Leeds Community Relations Council, for which the committee was extremely grateful. The Queen awarded first place was Valerie Daley in the costume designed and made by Arthur France called An African Bird. (Other contestants are listed in the Appendix to this book.)

At the Monday parade, steel bands were out in force: North Star, from Huddersfield; Boscoe and Paradise, both from Leeds; Regal Star and Star Quality, both from Manchester; and Contrast, from Leicester. This involvement demonstrated that the Leeds Carnival was reaching further into the West Indian communities in the north of England. A new route for the carnival parade had been agreed. It was shorter than before: after leaving Potternewton Park it would proceed up Regent Street and into North Lane and then into Chapeltown Road, avoiding the city centre. The 'Last Lap' dance was also held at Primrose Hill High School, where Steel Bands and a disco would provide the music between 9 pm and 2 am, for an entrance fee of £1.50.

In **1983** the entertainment at the Queen Show included some new faces: the Kooler Ruler Disco (run by Brickie [Peter Brown] and Jonathon Francis), John Noel, Friction Dance Group, La Rumba Limbo Dancers, plus the Paradise Steel Band. Scaffolding Great Britain and the National Westminster Bank added business support to that received from the public bodies. Theresa Thompson, as Queen of the Insects, won the Queen competition. The designer/maker was Hughbon Condor. (Other contestants and designers are listed on in the Appendix.)

The Monday parade included Metro, Paradise and Boscoe Steelbands from Leeds, and Star Quality and Caribbean Serenaders from Manchester, while Mavrick Sounds (from Leeds) and Tropical Heatwave Steel Band from Manchester provided music from the stage in the Park. This

year the parade was shortened again. Setting the precedent followed from then on, it left the Park and turned left in Harehills Avenue, then went south down Roundhay Road, turned right into Barrack Road, right up Chapeltown Road, and right again into Harehills Avenue, and then back to the Park.

The presence in 1983 of Kooler Ruler and Mavrick Sound Systems is significant. They represented the inclusion of British-born young men of West Indian heritage who had themselves built equipment of sufficient amplification to broadcast reggae-based music in public places (community centres, in Potternewton Park etc.). While the carnival committee was particularly keen to ensure that the traditional Trinidadian steel band music was the dominant sound at carnival, they sought to draw younger men and women, dedicated to Jamaican-based musical styles, into the carnival festivities.

At the **1984** carnival the programme for the Queen Show at Primrose Hill High School included the Marya Pili Dancers, a semi-professional group based at the Roseville Arts Centre and organised by Paul and Jan Hambley, and a ten minute performance by Judy and Linda from Bradford, who sang Deneice Williams' Lovers Rock number 'That's What Friends are For'. Kooler Ruler again provided the music. Carol Stapleton, in Arthur France's costume called Into Space, won the Queen competition. Hinting at the problems being posed for the carnival committee by residents who lived near the school who were objecting to this once a year night-time event, the programme was to end at 11 pm, with the bar closing at 12.30 am, and parking was allowed only on the adjacent Dolly Lane.

The Monday parade showcased the young people's New World Steel Band, recently formed by Arthur France in order to train youngsters in the steel pan tradition, as well as Paradise (Leeds), Star Quality Manchester), the Caribbeans (Leeds), Super Stars and Contrasts (both Manchester). 'Mitch Sounds' (later to become The Godfather Sound System) provided the music from the stage in the Park. The Last Lap dance (to finish at 1 am) was again at Primrose High School, at a cost of £2 per ticket.

At the **1985** carnival Debra Jeffers, an important member of the committee in later years, performed in a Queen costume designed by Arthur France. In Potternewton Park, a food stall was run by pillars of the Caribbean community: Mrs Casement, Mary Sadler, Myrna Tyrell and Millicent Francis. The Invaders troupe were prominent in the parade, with members including: Lennie Jeffers, Sefbon and Hughbon Condor, Linwall (Bix) Elliott, Mathew Boume, Patsy Condor, Jerome Carr, Nathan Boume, Elroy Condor, Mark Jerome, Angela Condor, Joan Jeffers, Jermaine Jones, Carol Condor, Anne Singer, Thea Ward, Sharon Kelly and Diane Charles. If you are beginning to think that Leeds carnival is a family affair, that's because it is.

This was the year in which the Carnival Queen Show and Last Lap dance was transferred to the West Indian Centre in Laycock Place off Chapeltown Road. George Mudie (then leader of Leeds City Council, later MP for Leeds East) had arranged for the car park outside the centre to be tarmaced, so that a marquee could be erected. This solved what'd was becoming a serious problem in the neighbourhood of Primrose Hill High School. Vanessa Bassue was the winning Queen in a costume named An Angel Glory, designed and made by members of St Martin's Church on Chapeltown Road.

For the **1986** carnival Lennie Jeffers had designed a new logo. The winning Queen was Lisa Condor in a costume designed by Hughbon Condor titled Sea Anenome. (Other contestants are listed in the Appendix.) The North Stars Steel Band from Huddersfield, including Crunch, Doc, Kevin, Skinhead, Warren and Marks were in the carnival parade on Bank Holiday Monday. *Caribbean Times*, the weekly newspaper edited by Arif Ali, was a sponsor of the carnival. The large British West Indian Airways logo in the Queen Show brochure indicated that major corporate

sponsorship had at last been acquired by the Committee. Beresford Sound played at the Queen Show, compered by Susan Pitter, and the Mighty Zipper provided the comedy.

There were several important changes to the Carnival in **1987**. The winners of the Carnival Prince and Princess contest appeared at the Queen Show. This is the first record of the special event which now takes place annually in which children, sometimes as young as three years old, and up to the age of thirteen, compete in costumes which are often almost as elaborate as those of the entrants to the Queen contest. Holding the Queen Show and the Last Lap dance in the marquee attached to the side of the West Indian Centre, in Laycock Place, off Chapeltown Road, provided the Committee with much greater control over the proceedings. One important consequence was that the New World Steel Orchestra was billed as playing in the marquee from 1.30 a.m. onwards.

At the Queen Show, earlier in the evening, a steel pan solo was performed by Dudley Nesbitt, who had arrived that year from Trinidad to take up a post teaching steel pan music and pan tuning. This appointment by Leeds City Council was the culmination of a long campaign spearheaded by Arthur France to encourage the Council to recognise steel pan music within its school and Music College curricula. Dudley had trained the New World band to play classical music, as well as dance music, and it was now named the New World Steel Orchestra. Playing solo, Dudley's virtuosity stunned and enraptured the audience at the Queen Show.

In **1988** the Carnival came of age and it celebrated its 21st birthday in some style. Thanks to major support from *Caribbean Times*, a commemorative 40 page A4 sized magazine was produced, which featured colour and black and white photo spreads of Queens, troupes and crowds, along with photographs of committee members in 1974 and 1988. Letters of support and commendation were included from the Leader of the City Council, George Mudie, from Richard Bourne (Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Institute), Alex Pascall (Hon. Chairman of the Carnival Arts Committee in London), James Aboaba (Chairman of the council's Technorth training centre), Christopher Price MA (Director of Leeds Polytechnic), Colin Sampson (Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police) and Ray Walmsley (Head of Department at the City of Leeds College of Music). These endorsement reflected the wide regard in which the Leeds carnival was held throughout the city, the region, and beyond. Interviews with people who participated in the first Leeds' carnival and



Members of the Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee in 1988. Back, L-R: Lennie Jeffers, Gloria Pemberton, Arthur France, Ken Wenham, Ian Charles, Tyrone Ambrose. Front: Mavis Bell, Melvin Zakers, Hughbon Condor. Photo: Max Farrar

with key personnel such as Arthur France, Ian Charles and Hughbon Condor made up the bulk of the magazine.

At the Queen Show, the Palace Youth Project in Leeds produced a costume that picked out the faces of Winnie and Nelson Mandela in sequins on butterfly wings. Since Nelson Mandela was still in prison in apartheid South Africa, and Winnie was a leading figure in the opposition, this costume deliberately reminded the audience of the radical politics that, historically, had been a feature of carnival. The winner of the Queen contest was Michelle Adams in a costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor called *The Visitor*. The 'Old Mas' section of the show was, as always, satirical. Max Farrar donned huge plastic ears and a collar and tie, while Ruth Bunday put on her best ermine, and they were captioned Charles and Di, making fun of that year's royal wedding. Arthur France grew large breasts and looked particularly fetching as Diane Abbott, the newly-elected first black female Member of Parliament.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (30.8.1988) played its part in celebrating 21 successful years with a full page of coverage off the parade on the day after the Bank Holiday. 'Carnival's happy 21st' was the banner headline, 'Birthday fun all the way for 40,000 revellers'. Police spokesperson for the day, Superintendent Gerry Ingham, was highly complimentary: 'Everyone had a good day and I thank the organisers and the people as a whole for making it a happy and successful event with no incidents, no arrests and no trouble'.

Mrs Gloria Pemberton, who participated in the first carnival and dressed for the anniversary as a Red Indian, leading a troupe of about 150 Red Indians, was quoted as saying: 'I think the atmosphere of carnival itself is very much the same as it was all those years ago but I think more people are at this one. It is always a very happy occasion'.

At the **1989** Queen Show Lord Silkie was back on stage (he and his crew had been put firmly in their place a year or two before when they challenged the carnival committee's competence), and the Godfather (Mitch Wallace) was playing the Sounds. Brenda Monique's dancers, Jenny (a singer), the limbo dancer Janet Halliday formed the rest of the entertainment before the actual contest of the Queens. Sheila Howarth was the winning queen, in a costume called *The Pot of Gold at the End of the Rainbow*, designed and made by Kam Sangra. (Other contestants appear in the Appendix.)

After the parade on Bank Holiday Monday, awards were made as follows:

- Best troupe: Carnival Fever (Huddersfield, designed by Hughbon Condor).
- Biggest troupe: African Prince and Princess (Gloria Pemberton and Beverley Samuels).
- Best Steel Band on the road: New World.
- Best individual costume: Arthur France.

1990s Carnivals

Although the Leeds West Indian Carnival has deliberately avoided the commercialisation that has overtaken the Notting Hill Carnival, following the massive corporate sponsorship it has obtained, the Leeds carnival grew in size and stature during the 1990s. This was largely due to the increased expertise of committee members, several of whom had been on the committee since the start; to the

increased involvement of carnival organisers in other towns in the north and the midlands; to the extra sponsorship obtained; and to extra activity by Hughbon Condor as a consultant to groups who wished to produce a Queen or a troupe but who lacked some of the expertise required.

The decade got off to a very bad start. Three people were killed on the Monday evening, after the procession had finished, at the **1990** Carnival. Frank Harris was fatally stabbed in Harehills Avenue after an argument broke out around the Live Wire Sound System from Birmingham. His friend Jeffrey Miles who lived in the West Midlands was later acquitted of wounding after using a machete to defend himself. Tony Salmon, a Birmingham disc jockey was found not guilty of murdering Mr Harris. The police claimed that witnesses were terrified of giving evidence against him (*Yorkshire Post* 3-4.12.1991). Two other people died from gunshot wounds, one accidentally from a ricochet, and the other, Sedley Sullivan, 28, from Birmingham, was thought to have been murdered by Tony Johnson, a 22 year old white man from Manchester. White Tony, as he was known, was executed by rival gang members in late February 1991 (*Yorkshire Evening Post* 26.2.1991). These macabre details are included here to ensure that no question is raised about the role of Leeds' people, or the effectiveness of the Leeds committee, in the carnival in Leeds. As police officers testify year after year, the Leeds carnival is remarkable for its peaceful enjoyment of art, community cohesion and pleasure.

In early reports of that year's Carnival, the press had been enthusiastic: 'Police happy as crowds enjoy festival' was the *Yorkshire Post's* headline on 28.8.1990, while its front page included a large picture of the winning Queen, Julie Royle-Evatt, over a report of traffic congestion all over the country. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* that day caught up with the news, quoting Ian Charles' sorrow at the deaths, with the police officer in charge on the day, Inspector Keith Bargh stating that, until these incidents 'the day had been orderly and good-humoured'. Cllr Garth Frankland (Labour, Chapel Allerton) stated that the deaths 'were not directly linked to the carnival . . . the official carnival was over' (*YEP* 28.8.1990). The Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee has referred to this as its *annus horribilis*.

The **1991** Carnival returned the event to its normal format, though the committee succeeded in persuading the youths not to set up their Sound Systems on Harehills Avenue. (Instead they were allocated marquees in Potternewton Park.) The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (27.8.1991) had a banner headline: 'The Smile of Summer' over a large photograph of three year-old Leahanna Forrest; and other photos of PC Nigel Good holding five year-old Edwin Farrell; Joan Carol Williams in a stylish hat; Claire Henry leading the Parade in her winning costume and PC Andy Jones playing a steel pan. Claire performed a costume called African Queen, designed by Alan Julian. These were the 'happy carnival' photos that the public had come to expect in Leeds. Martin Wainwright (*Guardian* 27.8.1991) reported that the crowd numbered 50,000, 'considerably down on last year', but the organisers and police estimated that 100,000 people had attended, and Superintendent Ray Evans said: 'It was a tremendously successful event and a tribute to the organisers' (*YEP* 27.8.1991).

At the **1992** Carnival Queen Show (the 25th anniversary show) there were ten contestants (listed in the Appendix). The winner that year was Denise Lazarus in a costume named 'Caterpillar-Butterfly' designed and made by Hughbon Condor. This costume dazzled the crowd, and the judges, with its technical and artistic brilliance, pushing carnival design in England in new directions.

The events on Bank Holiday Monday started with an innovation for the Leeds Carnival: a J'Ouvert morning parade (often referred to as Jouvay). Modelled on the original Trinidad early morning procession, people who had been raving all night at the Sunday event at the Leeds West Indian Centre, joined by those with less stamina who, nevertheless, got up early specially for this parade. They all formed a procession at about 6 am, and then, led by the Godfather's Sound System precariously lashed to the back of a truck, danced their way from the Centre, up Chapeltown Road,

down Harehills Avenue, into Spencer Place and then back to the Centre via Barrack Road. Traditionalists dressed in pyjamas and dressing gowns and some even carried their toothbrushes, while others displayed their charms in the clothes of the party the night before. Some managed to combine the two modes by donning bed-wear that was hard to distinguish from dance-wear. The Godfather and his crew wore their brassieres.

Monday's carnival parade in the afternoon was billed to include the following Steel Bands on the road: New World, Paradise, Esso and the Caribbeans, all from Leeds; North Stars and Sweet Melody from Huddersfield and Phase One from Coventry; with Lion Soca Band (Leicester), Beresford Sounds and Lady Jane Sound playing on the stage in the park. Two of the most famous of Trinidad's Carnival musicians, the Mighty Sparrow and David Rudder, played at the Last Lap dance on the Monday night in the Leeds West Indian Centre.

The **1993** Carnival had six contestants at the Queen Show in the marquee at the Leeds West Indian Centre (listed in the Appendix). For the first time, the programme explained the criteria by which the contestants were judged: originality, artistry and creativity (45 marks); how well the costume is displayed (25 marks); the impression it makes on the audience (10 marks); and the 'judge's personal evaluation' (10 marks). This effort at objectivity, however, has never been known to persuade any three people to agree on the judges' rank order. The winner this year was Angela Nelson in a costume designed by Marlene Ambrose and sponsored by Leeds City Council.

On the road that year were New World, North Stars, Esso, Star Quality, and Caribbeans Steel Bands with Godfather and Skinhead providing Sound Systems. Lady Jane and Beresford entertained again on the stage in the park.

Yet another huge name in Soca, Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, provided the music at the Last Lap dance. (Byron Lee is a significant exception to the rule that Trinidad is the main source of the Carnival tradition: he comes from Jamaica, and is the originator of the today's Jamaican carnival.) A longer than ever list of sponsors was acknowledged this year: Dragon Stout, Marlin House Trading, Leeds TEC, Creative Print, Yorkshire Arts, Leeds City Council, SGB Scaffolding, J Wray and Nephew Ltd, Yorkshire and Humberside Arts.

At the **1994** Carnival, the winning Queen was Kali Wilkes in a costume titled Fruits of the Caribbean made by members of St Aidan's Church on Roundhay Road in Leeds. Further record is limited to a stock of photographs held at West Yorkshire Archive Service. These give flavour of this year's carnival:

- J'Ouvert Morning revellers in pyjamas and dressing gowns on the road.
- Kali Wilkes, in the winning costume titled Fruits of the Caribbean, with her grandmother, Mrs Odessa Stoute, in Potternewton Park.
- Huddersfield's Caricou and Petit Martinique Grenada Association's Hell on Earth troupe in Potternewton Park.
- Natuley Smalle, Loretta Gaskin, Jaqui Gaskin, Jamila Gaskin and Jane Storr making the Palace Youth Project's Carnival troupe's costumes at the PYP's premises in Shepherd's Lane.
- Claire Howarth and two other carnival babes at the Prince and Princess Show in the marquee at the West Indian Centre.

The **1995** Carnival included the comedian Miles Crawford at the Prince and Princess show, with songs from Ayesha, the Original Steppers dancers, and music from the Godfather. Comedians Robbie Gee and Eddie Nestor (from the popular TV Show of the day called The Real McCoy), the local RJC Dance and the North Stars Steel Band provided the entertainment at the Queen show. The winning Queen that year was Pamela Campbell, from Leicester, in a costume she designed and made, called Descendants from Africa.

At the last Lap Dance on the Monday, Peter Hunningale and Janet Lee Davies

played in the Marquee, with Godfather, Kenny B, Fluid Irie and the Soul Criminal providing the sounds in the West Indian Centre hall, along with WCK, Dominica's Soca, Zouk and Jam Specialists.

The *Yorkshire Post's* photographs were in colour for first time in 1995 and its headline referred to its new technology: 'Thousands join in carnival of colour to cheer city streets with a taste of Caribbean sunshine'. Its reporter, not versed in the carnival tradition, said that 'Rum, reggae and the smell of Caribbean cooking were the elements which made a small corner of Leeds look like Barbados' (29.8.1995). Unfortunately, the *YP* had still not caught on that Soca is the predominant music at Carnival, and Barbados is not its inspiration. But the article meant well. And it was right about rum, however, at least for some of the revellers. 50,000 people were estimated to have taken part, and four arrests were reported.

There were seven Queen contestants at the **1996** Carnival (see Appendix). Sabrina Collins, in a costume designed and made by Brenda Monique, was the winner. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (26.8.1996) described this as a six foot high costume in the shape of a swan, named Signet Serenade, and made from white satin, plus gold and silver fabric, on a frame of fibre glass and iron rods. Entertainment at the Queen Show included North Stars, RJC Dance Theatre, Alexander D Great (calypsonian) and Felicity Ethnic (comedienne). The 'Old Mas' had finally been deemed a little too old-fashioned and was not be seen again. The popular DJ and radio presenter Mr Fluid Irie (Richard Smith) joined Susan Pitter as the compère. Taneesha James, aged 11, was the winning Princess, displaying her costume Goddess of the Scales of Justice (designed and made by her mother Cheryl and Norma Cannonier). Romaine Otley (8) showed his winning Prince costume, Bacchanal Bronco, made by members of Chapeltown Community Centre.

This year's innovation for the ever-dynamic Leeds West Indian Carnival was the Calypso Monarch contest on the Saturday night, where several men who were old enough to know better (aged 50 to 70 plus) dressed up to sing calypsos which they had composed themselves, backed by a local steel band organised by St Clair Morris. The singers cavorted on the small stage in the hall at the West Indian Centre. Another highlight was an 18-piece skiffle steel band from Trinidad which played on the stage in the Park on the Monday.

1997 was the year that Arthur France received his MBE from the actual Queen. Although his contributions to civic and national life stretch well beyond carnival, this award was at least in part a fitting recognition of his extraordinary dedication to creating and developing the Caribbean carnival in Leeds.

In 1997 the Queen contestants had risen to ten (see Appendix). Entertainment that night included RJC Dance and North Stars, while the comedian was Marcus Powell (of the TV Show *A-Force*) playing Roy Diamond, the Godfather of black comedy, the Stush singing duo and a remarkable display of classical pan music from Earl Rodney. Nigel and Marvin Lewis, a leading Caribbean soca act, led the dancing in the Marquee at the Last Lap dance, while Fluid, Kenny B, Prince and Natty, and Mad Dawg and Poison played the hall.

Indicating their commitment to the Leeds Carnival, J Wray and Nephew took out a four page advertising supplement to the *Yorkshire Evening Post* to remind us that Appleton Rum would improve the carnival spirit, particularly if mixed into the cocktails whose recipes were so kindly provided: Port Royal, Mobay Breeze, Green Parrot and, perhaps most expressively, Jamaican Slam. Not to be outdone, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* provided its own 24 page tabloid guide to the 30th anniversary of the Carnival in Leeds, with messages from Cllr Norma Hutchinson, one of the few black councillors in the city, and Arthur France MBE. Some of the points Arthur France made were that carnival is seen by many, regardless of race, colour, class, creed or religion as a time when people unite, if only for one day of the year. It is also a platform to demonstrate the positive

contributions which the people of Chapeltown make to the city. But above all, Leeds carnival (for its impact is city-wide) is about joy, happiness, fun and unity.

Indicating just how multi-cultural the Leeds carnival had become, the supplement included a full-page photograph of Karen Fowler and Julie Willerton, two white women working in Sheila Howarth's team making Aztecs costumes in Harehills Community Centre. In a long profile article, Hughbon Condor explained that his inspiration lay in his awareness that Carnival 'is the only positive means of portraying black culture from a black angle without being controlled by white institutions. It's an opportunity to display one's artistic talents'.

In another article, Susan Pitter traced the origins of Carnival to Shango festivals of enslaved Africans transported to Trinidad, as well as European traditions and those of the East Indians and the Chinese who arrived there as indentured labourers in the 1840s. Large black and white photographs of steel pan player and tutor, Dudley Nesbitt at the drums, and of Hughbon Condor and Arthur France at work on a costume were included in the special supplement. The back page showed colour photos of the 1986 Queen (Lisa Condor), 1988's Michelle Adams and 1994's Kali Wilkes.

At the **1998** carnival there were ten contestants at the Carnival Queen Show (see Appendix). The winner was Monique Farara (aka Brenda Monique) in a costume titled Snow Goddess designed by Yola Farrell. Jo-Ann Alexander (Mystical Sun Goddess) designed by Delores Patterson from Leicester was placed second, and Rachel Wilkes (Firebird) designed by Tyrone Ambrose of Leeds was third.

The Queen show brochure announced another Calypso Monarch competition for Saturday 29th August and the J'Ouvert morning parade to start at 6 am on the Bank Holiday Monday. A 'Health Warning' was included for the Monday night: 'Soca can seriously damage your hips. For proper instructions check out the Last Lap dance starring St Lucia's No. 1 Soca Band "Reasons"'. Other attractions for that night included: Godfather, Fluid ('the Ladies' R&B choice from Kiss FM'), Kenny B ('BBC Leeds Most Wanted Revivalist'), Prince and Natty with the Excitement Crew ('From GFM, the dynamic dancehall duo') and Mad Dawg and Poison Magnum P.A. ('Radio Cup Clash Winners'). In a message to the two or three people who had caused trouble at the Last Lap dance in previous years, the brochure included this warning: 'Strict security in operation – no search, no entry. Remember the Carnival Sprit is a peaceful one, let's jam in harmony!!!'

The *Yorkshire Post's* (1.9.1998) headlines were 'Colourful scenes and fun in the sun to the sounds of Soca as carnival comes to the city' and 'Caribbean spectacle pulls in the Bank Holiday crowds'. The *YP* highlighted the Harrison Bunday solicitors' troupe, titled 'Judge Dread – innocent until proven guilty': 'They were dressed as judges and stereotyped characters with labels around their necks, such as "hooligan" and "terrorist". They were being photographed by a man labelled "paparazzi". (This 'paparazzi' was Guy Farrar, one of the carnival's official photographers and an author of this book.) Harrison Bunday, founded by Ruth Bunday, is the troupe which every year injects a political theme into the carnival.

The *YP* reported that 35,000 people were estimated to have attended on the Monday, with 100,000 as the estimated attendance over the whole series of Bank Holiday events. 'Mac' McLean, who had attended every Carnival since 1967 was reported as saying that the carnival was 'a focal point. The carnival is important, but the main thing is to meet your friends'. Shirley Pinto, 65, from Bradford, and her Jamaican husband Gilbert, 67, were also regular attendees since the early days. Mrs Pinto was quoted as saying 'Colour doesn't seem to matter here like it does in some places'. The police reported only one incident, a handbag theft, over the four days.

The **1999** Carnival brochure, by RAW Design company, was the most elaborate yet produced. Twenty-four pages long, A5 format, the brochure included full details of all the events, advertisements, information on the important regeneration programme for Harehills and

Chapelton organised by the URBAN Partnership Group, and an exclusive interview with Sir Trevor Macdonald (who recalled that he was the Master of Ceremonies at the 1970 Queen Show), saying that he was an admirer of the highly satirical Trinidadian calypsonians Sparrow and Lord Kitchener). At the Queen Show, Delores Patterson, from Leicester, wore the winning costume (named Bull Fight) which she had designed herself. Mahalia France came second as Mystery Bird of Paradise designed by her father, Arthur France. Donna Odian came third in a costume called The Colour of Water designed by Rhian Kempadoo-Millar for Mango Design.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (31.8.1999) recorded that Leeds's 'Caribbean Fantasy' won the 'largest troupe' prize, and that Manchester's 'Magicadabra' was judged the best troupe. The Caribbean band 'Kasanova' headlined at the Last Lap dance. Superintendent Frank Farmer, the Chapelton police divisional commander, was quoted as saying: 'Once again the carnival was extremely successful and well attended. Credit must go to the organisers of both the [Reggae] concert [on the Saturday] and the carnival [on Monday]. It was a week-end for all the family with a friendly happy atmosphere which speaks volumes for the community of Chapelton. It was a pleasure policing the event'.

1999 was the year in which Carnival Messiah, an extraordinary tribute to the carnival experience written and directed by Geraldine Connor, was first performed at West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. Although this was not an official Leeds West Indian Carnival event, it is included here because of Geraldine's huge influence on the Leeds carnival and on the city itself. A renowned musicologist, her book on steel pan music is included in the 'further reading' section in the Appendix to this book, and her PhD thesis (2006) explaining Carnival Messiah is in the library of Leeds University.

2000s carnivals

At the **2000** carnival Queen Show there were 15 contestants, more than ever before (see Appendix). Sarai Campbell, in a costume named Carnival Paradise, designed by Vinod France, Romain Otle and Sarai Campbell (from Leeds) won the competition (and a prize of £500). In the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (29.8.2000) Sarai said 'The idea behind the costume is that there is paradise out there for everyone — search hard enough and you will find it.' Chantelle Davies (Queen of the Lily) by Cheryl James and Norma Cannonier (also from Leeds) came second. Joanne Alexander (The Puppet Entertainer) by Leicester Parents' and Children's Centre was placed third. First prize in the Princess competition went to Felicia James as Princess of Siam, designed by Gloria Fredrick; Shaniqua Thomas came second in Colours of the Caribbean and Shaneen Morris was third as The Protector. In the Prince competition, Oratio Morton was the winner, in a costume designed by the Palace Youth Centre, titled King of the Palace; Carl March was second and Courtney Williams was third. Financial support came from a Leeds City Council project called Leeds Urban Initiative, which also made real improvements to the infrastructure of Chapelton at that time.

Leeds' Lord Mayor Councillor Bernard Atha accompanied by TV presenter Clare Frisbee, Lady Mayoress, opened the parade on Bank Holiday Monday. 50,000 people was the estimated attendance. There were 20 costumed troupes and 12 lorry floats. The eight piece samba band 'Reasons' from St Lucia played. The West Indian Centre Ladies performed in blue polka-dot clown outfits. Arthur France said this to the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (29.8.2000): 'This is a celebration of emancipation and freedom of our forefathers from slavery . . . Everyone has a genuine smile on their face — and that can only be a good thing.' On the front page of the *Yorkshire Post* (29.8.2000), Arthur France said: 'This is one of the few occasions when everyone regardless of colour, race, age, creed or class can come together. There is no other celebration like it'. In the page

7 story, he added: 'Leeds's reputation as the home of carnival in Europe is recognised. It's something the whole city can be proud of.'

In **2001** the presentation of the Queen Show was greatly enhanced by its move to a beautifully constructed marquee in the city's fabulous new square in front of the Civic Hall, constructed to celebrate the Millennium in 2000. There were 14 contestants. The Queen placed first in the contest was Stacey Robinson (from Huddersfield) in a costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor called The Pollinator Honey Bee. Stacey, in a bee costume, could detach herself from the structure, climb up it, and pollinate the flowers. Susan Pitter, the carnival's public relations manager, described it as follows: 'This is a very special costume. It is one of the most original and colourful costumes I have ever seen and has really set a standard for the future.' (See Allison Bellamy's report in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25.8.2001.) Second place went to Monica Richards, from Leeds. The Carnival Princess was Olita Duhaney from Meanwood in Leeds, and Dale Fleming was the Prince in a Neptune costume.

The anti-police violence in Harehills that had taken place in June had not dampened spirits, the organisers of the carnival said. Susan Pitter commented 'Leeds carnival is for everyone in this city regardless of where they live, their background, race or culture'. Arthur France added: 'This continues to be one of the city's most important and enjoyable family attractions' (*YEP* 25.8.2001).

At the parade on Bank Holiday Monday, the sun shone brightly on ten princesses, five princes, 14 music floats, 15 Queen costumes, 20 troupes, and the Brazilian samba troupe made a welcome return. Queen of the carnival Stacey Robinson (17) said: 'This has been a dream come true for me. But it is not just my day — it's everybody's.' Arthur France said: 'The event has been bigger and better than ever before with everyone uniting under the umbrella of arts, crafts and entertainment.' The *YEP* reported: 'Police said the Bank Holiday event was a major success and there had not been a single arrest. A spokesperson said: "Its success is down to the hard work of the organisers and the local community and it has been a pleasure to be involved in policing the event."' (See Andrew Hutchinson's report in *YEP*, 28.8.2001.)

In **2002**, the winning Queen was another Hughbon Condor creation, this time called The Ship, performed by Sharon Clement. Lord Mayor Councillor Brian North opened the parade on Monday, which consisted of eight princes, 14 princesses, 15 floats and 22 troupes. Susan Pitter said: 'The day has been a testament to how much work has been put in and how popular Leeds carnival is. It has exceeded our expectations in terms of participation. The weather is making it even better.' (See Mike Hurst, *YEP*, 27.8.02.)

The rain poured down in **2003** on the 23 floats in the procession, but carnival's indomitable spirit prevailed. Ian Charles said 'It went very well and I think people had a good time'. Chief Supt Dick Rothwell said 'People not only had a good day but could experience the vibrancy of the Chapeltown area' (*YEP* 26.8.03). Helena Hamlet led the procession as the winning Queen in a costume called Soca Butterfly, designed and made, again, by Hughbon Condor.

2004 marked another step forward for Leeds West Indian Carnival. Its newly acquired Carnival and Arts Centre ('carnival HQ') was opened in Sheepscar Street, fittingly close to the West Indian Centre and the Mandela Centre in the heart of Chapeltown. This year also marked the arrival of Luton's Rampage Mas Band as a serious contender for costume supremacy. Colin Spalding designed the winning costume, De Birth of the Phoenix, performed to perfection by Luton's Davina Williams.

At the parade, opened by Lord Mayor Cllr Chris Townsey, there were 25 troupes, 16 floats, 16 Queens, 13 Princesses, 11 princes with a group of Egyptians complete with a pyramid. Around 800 people joined in the procession. Leeds NE Member of Parliament Fabian Hamilton 'was sporting a gold-flecked costume specially made for him by carnival chairman Arthur France'. Mr Hamilton said: 'As always the organisers have made this carnival into a major event. It's no longer

just Chapeltown or Leeds — people come from all over the country to be here. It's absolutely superb.' (See Katie Baldwin, *YEP* 31.8.04.)

Davina Williams again won the **2005** Queen contest, this time in a costume titled *Dis Must Be Mas*, designed again by Colin Spalding from Rampage in Luton. Chris Murphy's *YEP* (30.8.05) story quoted Lord Mayor Bill Hyde: 'I'm delighted to be here for such a spectacle. How on earth some of you manage to get round the procession with some of these creations is beyond me. The carnival is so important to the city so, on behalf of Leeds, thank you.' The report included this from participants in the Monday parade: Claire Howarth (15) said it took her two weeks to make her costume as part of a school project. She said: 'I think carnival is brilliant. It brings everyone together and the costumes are amazing'. Carol Condor (34) wearing an Indian Warrior costume made by her uncle [the ubiquitous Hughbon Condor] said: 'People have come to Leeds from all over the country and I think it's because the people here are so friendly and approachable it makes such a fantastic atmosphere.' In Potternewton Park, Patricia Jones's calypso pudding (rice pudding and calypso sponge) stall did very good business.

Hughbon Condor returned to form in **2006** when his costume *The Bush Warrior*, performed by Sarah Bryant, from Huddersfield, won first place at the Queen Show. 100,000 people from all over the north and Leicester, Birmingham, Nottingham and the Unity Group, escaping from Notting Hill for an authentic community carnival, assembled in Potternewton Park and in Chapleotwn's streets on Bank Holiday Monday. Lord Mayor Cllr Mohammed Iqbal opened the proceedings with these moving words: 'I feel honoured and proud to be the first coloured Lord Mayor of Leeds. This great city has a proud record of welcoming people from all different backgrounds. We are proud of this lovely city. Enjoy and celebrate our cultures and our heritage.'

Such quotes explain the attraction of the Leeds carnival. Sarah Bryant (17) leading the parade as carnival queen, said: 'I feel really proud to be doing this. I've been here before, but never as carnival queen.' She was part of the Caribbean Carnival Crusade Club in Huddersfield, which travels to carnivals across the UK.

Hyacinth Francis (42, from Nottingham) leads a Mas band called *Hya Level*. It is part of Nottingham Mothers Against Crime. She said: 'It's something for the young people to do. It brings unity and a lot of them don't get to leave Nottingham so we travel around the country and it gives them a chance to meet people.'

Samantha Browne (24, from Leeds) of the People in Action group, said 'I just love it here. It really brings people together. I [work] with people with disabilities and we bring them along and they absolutely love it.' Teacher Rebecca Webster brought 26 students from Woodkirk Specialist Science High School in Morley (administratively part of Leeds): 'It's a real buzz and the atmosphere is just fantastic.' Pam, from Liecester's Bumpa Crew Mas band said: 'We go all over the country but this one is fantastic. There's a real community feeling and it such good fun.' (See Jo Rostron's report in *YEP* 29.8.06.)

2007 was the Leeds carnival's 40th anniversary. Carnival's importance to the city was reflected in this front page statement from the *Yorkshires Evening Post*: 'It's one of the things which makes Leeds a great city — and a record crowd of more than 100,000 celebrated its 40th birthday in style.' Faintly echoing the 'emancipation' theme championed by Arthur France, the editorial continued: carnival 'complemented Yorkshire's contribution to events marking the bicentenary of the abolition of transatlantic slavery'.

In its editorial, the *YEP* stated 'As a symbol of how far society has come since [the abolition of slavery] it [carnival] was better than any sociological study . . . And though it may not be the biggest of its kind in Britain, it is still the oldest and — for our money — the best in the land.' Harrison Bunday's masquerade (with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund) picked up this important anniversary with an Abolition-themed troupe.

Leeds carnival's merits were also recognised during this year by the award of an MBE to one of its founders, Ian Charles. He said to Richard Evans in the *YEP* (28.08.07): 'It's nice for me personally but it is all about the carnival. We started something and never, ever thought of it going this far . . . There are people here from all over the world.' He went on to praise Leeds city council for helping change the image of carnival from 'Chapelton' to 'Leeds carnival'.

The winning Queen, Charlene Smith was in an 'unmissable outfit, a white charger' that had taken eight months to make. She said 'It's an amazing feeling, the best vibe ever. There are butterflies in my stomach but the adrenaline is really going. It's massive privilege.' Jimmy Sudlow, from Middlesbrough, in the queue at Maureen's Caribbean food stall, said 'I've been to Notting Hill before but didn't know about this carnival till now. It's like a hidden gem and I'll definitely be back.' (See Richard Edwards, *YEP*, 28.08.07.)

In **2008** Davina Williams won the Queen competition for the third time, in another of Rampage's spectacular costumes. In the *YEP*, Aisha Iqbal described the parade like this: It was a 'sun-drenched treat . . . a magical menagerie of fantastic feathered creations, saucy, sequin-encrusted costumes, booty-shaking dancers, giant, purple butterfly creatures and soaring cygnets and orange birds, it was a feast for the eyes and the soul.' She reported Leona Clark (28) saying that she loved the Leeds carnival and had been coming since she was eight: 'I love the music, the food, the dancing, everything.'

Nicola Isles was the Queen of the carnival in **2009**. The parade was opened by Cllr Judith Elliot, the Lord Mayor, who said: 'It's easy to see why this carnival is so well known not only in England but across Europe.' Erik Richardson (76), originally from St Kitts, said he'd always come to carnival, right from the start. 'I always enjoy myself and Leeds has a good go at doing carnivals like they have them back in the West Indies'. Omar Benisreal (45) from Manchester said 'I've been to Leeds two or three times before. It's a chance to see people you haven't seen for a long time and it's all a melting pot. It's a chance for people to put aside their differences, at least for one day.' (See Stuart Robinson's report in the *YEP*, 1.9.09.)

The winning Queen in **2010** was Chloe Brown and the King and Queen show, in rather chilly open air, in Millennium Square, included RJC Dance, New World Steel Orchestra and a host of African dancers. Aisha Iqbal (*YEP* 31.8.10) enthused about Monday's parade of 'dragons, sun gods, tigers, peacocks, giant butterflies' performing in 'blazing sunshine'.

In **2011** Ann Williams was crowned Queen of the carnival. Opening the parade, Cllr Reverend Alan Taylor, Lord Mayor, said: 'It's my 27th year and it gets bigger and it gets better. I think we need to bring the people of Notting Hill to see what we can do. I hope that everybody enjoys themselves and the the spirit of carnival continues because it's great for our city and it's great for the people of Chapelton and Harehills. Keep up the good work.' Demonstrating the range of creative interests in the Leeds carnival, the parade included male nuns and a statue of liberty. (See Aisha Iqbal, *YEP* 30.8.11.)

Carnival Queen Samantha Hudson led the parade of 25 troupes in the rain in **2012**. Arthur France gave a more detailed rationale for carnival than he had done before: 'Today Leeds carnival is so much more than I ever expected. It's no longer just a remedy for homesickness. Carnival brings joy to the whole city and is one big party that everyone is invited to. It's hard work organising the carnival but it's important as we celebrate the emancipation of our forefathers from slavery and by being here today we make sure that they didn't die in vain.' (See Sophie Hazan, *YEP*, 28.8.12.)

2012 was the year in which the Geraldine Connor Foundation was established, following Geraldine's death in 2011. It has sponsored carnival costumes ever since, and developed musical and performance projects with young people inspired by Geraldine's life and work.

In **2013**, Carnival Queen Julia Russell and Carnival King Keith Powell headed the parade. Aisha Iqbal wrote: 'Tens of thousands of people flocked to watch the event, which has become a

beacon of solidarity and community harmony for Leeds.’ She quoted Cllr Mohammed Iqbal offering the view that the 100,000 or so people who attend carnival is ‘excellent for Leeds, it’s good for Chapeltown, it’s good for the local economy and it’s good for multiculturalism, cohesion and integration. There’s black, white, Asian, young and old, everybody is here and they are all enjoying themselves.’ (*YEP* 27.8.13.)

2014 marked another important development in the Leeds carnival’s increasingly close relations with the city and with Yorkshire as a whole. A ‘pop-up’ carnival band was specially created for the 5th July opening of the Tour de France cycle race in Leeds. Then Leeds carnival popped up on the beach in Scarborough on 26th July. Another notable change was the King and Queen Show moved to West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds for the first time. This solved a perennial problem for the staging of carnival — how to manage large costumes in the often cramped ‘back stage’ areas of previous venues. It also allowed for top quality lighting and sound design. Davinia Harmer won the Queen competition that year.

Responding to the grey skies over the parade on Bank Holiday Monday, Arthur France said: ‘Come rain or shine, carnival is a spectacle that never fails to amaze both spectators and participants. The thrill of the costumes, the beat of the music, the delicious food and above all the happy atmosphere are what has made carnival such a wonderful attraction for five decades — whatever the weather.’ (Allison Bellamy, *YEP*, 26.8.14.)

The King and Queen show at the Playhouse in **2015** included star TV actors and comedians Robbie Gee and Eddie Nestor, Leeds’ own Caution Collective and the guitarist Rob Green. The professional soca artist College Boy Jesse (from Trinidad and Tobago) and Leeds’ own soca star Brenda Monique (Farara) entertained the huge crowd.

Elroy Condor in a costume titled ‘Flight of Fantasy’, designed by Sefton Condor, won the King contest. Charis Betts, in the ‘The Dream Catcher’ costume designed by Lincoln Rahamut and built by Charis Betts, Lincoln Rahamut, Anthony Deonarine and Athan Martin from Inspired Masquerade (in Leicester) won the Queen title. (See Appendix for the full list of contestants.)

The heavens opened again on Bank Holiday Monday. Carnival took to the road with its usual enthusiasm but fewer spectators.

But the sun came out again for the parade at the **2016** carnival, led by Lenard Carrol (King) and Charlene Clarke (Queen). The King and Queen Show at West Yorkshire Playhouse was perhaps the most spectacular ever. Compèred with her usual grace and style by Susan Pitter, there were a record six King contestants, along with nine Queens. Lenard Carroll in a costume titled Journey of the Caribbean Rose, designed and made by Unity Carnival Arts and the Geraldine Connor Foundation (Leeds) took first place in the King competition. Hughbon Condor performing a costume called All Ah We designed and made by his son by Seph Condor (of High Esteem Designs and ACE) was placed second. Carl Harvey as Toruk by Tashi Brown for T&M Creative came third.

Charleene Clarke in a costume called The Black Swan and her Daughter designed and made by Unity Carnival Arts and the Geraldine Connor Foundation (Leeds) took first place among the Queens. Pareesha Webster, Gateway to Wonderland, by Pareesha Webster of Valentina’s Collective was second, and Marie Marriott, Jewel of the Caribbean, by Lincoln Rahamut (Nottingham) came third. The full list of King and Queen contestants is in the Appendix to this book.

In a fulsome tribute to the carnival’s place in Leeds, city council leader Cllr Judith Black said: ‘The Leeds West Indian Carnival has become a cornerstone of our city’s cultural calendar and moreover a symbol of the diversity and togetherness that exists here in Leeds. Tens of thousands of people have played a part in this year’s celebration and in doing so they have further strengthened the city’s reputation as a warm, vibrant and eclectic city. As the longest running event of its kind in Europe, the carnival continues to be a landmark occasion that makes a significant contribution to the local economy, boosts the city’s cultural offering but most importantly helps to foster a sense of

community spirit and pride year after year.’ (The carnival is estimated to be worth around £3.5 m each year to the local economy.) (See Paul Robinson, *YEP* 30.8.16.)

——- Box opens ——

“I was a carnival lady since I was born.”

Mrs Gloria Pemberton, in conversation with Max Farrar, reflects on her life in carnival.

Mrs Gloria Pemberton was one of the first people to get involved with the original carnival in Leeds, and the forest of trophies in her home in Francis Street [in Chapeltown, Leeds] is one measure of her contribution she has made. Now 73 years old [in 2007], and not as mobile as she used to be, she will be making her way down to Potternewton Park [where masqueraders assemble on Bank Holiday Monday each year], as she has done for the past 40 years.

Nothing — not even childbirth — has interrupted her commitment. Proudly holding one of dozens of shining trophies, she said: “I did born a baby in hospital an’ straight away I came out an’ play Mas, so they gave me this trophy.”

She had learned all about carnival as a girl in St Kitts. “I was a carnival lady since I was born till I came here,” she said. “Carnival back home was good. We got dressed up at Buckley’s Estate and we pick up people till we reach town [Basseterre]. Then we go to Sir Warner’s Park and we get on stage and we dance and they see who best.” She had been trained in all types of dance by a lady called Miss Francis and in the carnival she worked with Eddie Vantapool. Did you win, I asked? “Yeah, of course.”

Mrs Pemberton arrived in Leeds in 1960. “I did love it on the boat.” The St Kitts-Nevis ladies helped the sailors making the beds and such like, and she can still recall the pleasure she had when they called out “passengers from St Kitts, dinner is ready” in thanks for the help the sailors had been given.

She came to Leeds to pass on things her mother had sent to her sisters in Leeds, intending to *Mrs Gloria Pemberton with some of dozens of trophies at her Chapeltown home in 2007*
Photo: Max Farrar

return to her friends in London. But her sisters said “All your family is here — you got to stay”, so she did, and found work at Montague Burton’s, the tailors [in Harehills, Leeds].

She met Arthur France [from Nevis] and told him she had been actively involved in carnival at home, and he got her to help with the first carnival in Leeds. “We made a costume called Deck of Cards,” she said. Because she had always done dancing, she founded Sustain Dance Troupe. “Ian Charles gave us a place to practise. All my friends’ daughters want to dance. I look forward to inviting them each year. It’s good — we all so happy.”

“When I get to carnival this year I will feel good. It’s a great achievement, 40 years of carnival in Leeds. People say to me: “Gie up de carnival” but I say “It’s alright I give up in my own time. God will know when I had enough.”

Published in the Leeds West Indian Carnival 40th anniversary magazine, 2007.

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The Cockspur Crew

Lord Silkie: Every year, Lord Silkie (Artie Davis) blesses the carnival revellers with the sight of his bottom. Some faint-hearts are shocked and others are amused by the sight of this large man dropping whatever scanty garment he has chosen to cover his considerable posterior, and leaping onto the back of some hapless female member of The Cockspur Crew as the prance around the stage. Some say it's a matter of taste; others say it depends on your point of view. Whatever way you look at it, it's a very big surprise.

Lord Silkie has always been larger than life, and at carnival he becomes even larger. He lives for carnival. 'I played in the 1967 carnival, and I've been involved with every single one since then,' he said. I like being the humorous part of carnival, I'm a comedian, and I love the razzmatazz. I try to create some excitement and get people going.' Certainly, the women get going when he jumps on their back — in the opposite direction, as quickly as they can.

'A drink goes a long way on carnival day — it brings out the best in you,' he said. In previous years his troupe has been sponsored by Tetley's [the brewery once based in Leeds], but now Cockspur Rum back the Crew. Note that the shift was influenced by the desire to support a Caribbean product, rather than the strength of the liquid that flows down their throats.



The key to the Cockspur Crew. The Godfather, Lord Silkie and African Man in 1988. Photo: Max Farrar

Silkie's original contribution to the carnival was as a calypsonian. For the first six carnivals he wrote the lyrics and performed with a small guitar, organ and drums band. 'I wrote satirical songs about local events and people. There were other calypsonians — Lord Prince, Count Mitzie, The Mighty Chucka — and we all competed to be Calypso King, with our costumes,' said Lord Silkie. For the last three years he won each time, and eventually no-one would compete with him.

Silkie feels very strongly that the calypso competition should be revived. 'It's the music of the Westindians [sic], it is part of our culture that is fading away. It should be preserved. I'd like to train the youths in calypso techniques and start it up again.'

His contribution to the Old Mas sketches are one of the highlights of the Queen Show. 'Old Mas' has its origin in the festival days of colonial society when slaves dressed in imitation of their overseers and made a mockery of white society. The comedy of Old Mas and calypso has traditionally been a comedy of satire — the special weapon of those who seek to undermine the wrong-doers.

Nowadays, Old Mas is sometimes less satirical, and played just for laughs. Silkie recalls the joyous moment when he let a live fowl free on the stage, and when he and Kinkie poked fun at Daley Thompson [UK Olympic gold medalist in 1980 and 1984] and Tessa Sanderson [who won gold for the UK in 1984]. Whatever they do, they bring the house down.

The Godfather: The Godfather [Mitch Wallace] was a child when he joined Arthur France's African Warriors troops in 1969. 'I'd always played in the carnival at Christmas in St Kitts — all my family and friends were involved, so I joined the troupe here as soon as I could,' he said. In 1970 he met Lord Silkie and joined in with his troupe of revellers. 'Silkie was so funny and exciting, and I've stayed with them ever since.'

Like all carnival players, the Godfather says: "I want to preserve this Westindian culture, it's what I'm used to and it's what I love." He plays soca and calypso on the local pirate radio Rapid 105.8 FM for the same reason. "It reminds us of home, this is cultural music, and the carnival is special for steel band and soca music."

He says the younger people seem to want reggae and Sound Systems, "but that's not carnival culture. Once a year we just give that culture its respect, and play reggae, soul and so on after that." The Godfather would like to see more young people get involved with the carnival — "it's the tradition of our forefathers," he said.

He'd also like to see the calypso competition revived and the extra funds to be found of all those who participate in the carnival. He says the committee does a tremendous job, and he'd like to join in next year to contribute more to carnival.

Kinkie: Lord Silkie said: "Without Kinkie — we call him The African Man — the Cockspur Crew would be lost. He's been in the Crew since the second carnival." Kinkie said: "I love the carnival because I'm a Caribbean man and I love to see black people dress up in the streets, especially the big bottom black women."

This article by Max Farrar was first published in the Leeds West Indian Carnival's 21st Anniversary magazine in 1988.

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APPENDIX

They made the Leeds West Indian Carnival, 1967-2017

The Queens (and later the Kings) of Leeds West Indian Carnival

Vicki Cielto 1967
Gloria Simpson 1968
Janet France 1969
Jean Jeffers 1970
Yolan Baptiste 1971
Trudy Matura 1972
Rita Carambocus 1973
Yvonne Ruddock 1974

Audrey Henry 1975
No queen 1976
Patricia Wilkes 1977
No Queen 1978
Maureen Williams 1979
Patricia Powell 1980
Theresa Thompson 1981
Valerie Daley 1982
Cavell Brown 1983
Carol Stapleton 1984
Vanetta Bassue 1985
Lisa Condor 1986
Ann Marie Claxton 1987
Michelle Adams 1988
Sheila Howarth 1989
Julie Royle-Evatt 1990
Clare Henry 1991
Denise Lazarus 1992
Angela Nelson 1993
Kali Wilkes 1994
Pamela Campbell 1995
Sabrina Collins 1996
Stacey Morris 1997
Brenda Monique 1998
Delores Patterson 1999
Sarai Campbell 2000
Stacey Robinson 2001
Sharon Clement 2002
Helena Hamlet 2003
Davina Williams 2004
Davina Williams 2005
Sarah Bryant 2006
Charlene Smith 2007
Davina Williams 2008
Nicola Isles 2009
Chloe Brown 2010
Ann Williams 2011
Samantha Hudson 2102
Julia Russell (Queen) and Keith Powell (King) 2013
Davinia Harmer 2014
Charis Betts (Queen) Elroy Condor (King) 2015
Charleene Clarke (Queen) Lenard Carroll (King) 2016

Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee Members

1967
Calvin Beech (Chair)
Ian Charles
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Arthur France
Irwin and Rounica
Tony Lewis
Rose McAlister
Vanta Paul
Willie Robinson
Anson Shepherd
Samlal Singh
Ken Thomas
Wally Thompson

1973

Betty Bertie Chairman
Felina Hughes Secretary
Ian Charles Public Relations
Stanley Monish Liaison
Arthur France Director of Troupes
George Archibald Director of Steelbands
Hughbon Condor Costumes Consultant

1974 (Some members)

Vince Wilkinson
Hughbon Condor
Hebrew Rawlins
Arthur France
Kathleen Brown
George Archibold

1988 (Some members)

Lennie
Gloria Pemberton
Ian Charles
Arthur France
Ken Wenham
Tyrone Ambrose
Mavis
Melvin Zakers
Hughbon Condor

1990

Melvyn Zakers
Yola Fredricks
Hughbon Condor
Susan Pitter
Gloria Pemberton
Ian Charles
Mavis Bell
Stanley Monish
Tyrone Ambrose
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2000

Ian Charles: Co-ordinator and Treasurer

Arthur France: Chairperson

Susan Pitter: Public Relations

Derek Evelyn

Iola Fredricks

Brian Phillips

Richard Smith

Melvyn Zakers

Bernard Braimah

Stuart Bailey

Yola Farrell

Brenda Farara

Sheila Howarth

Nigel Wilkes

2007

Ian Charles: Co-ordinator and Treasurer, since 1967

Brenda Farara: Vice Chair, since 1987

Debbie Feffers: Secretary, since 2002

Brainard Braimah, since 1985

Stuart Bailey, since 1984

Sheila Howarth, since 1984

Brian Phillips, since 1980

Dark Evelyn, since 1994

Norma Cannonier, since 2002

Yolo Frederick, since 1984

Melvyn Zakers, since 1982

Alan Julian, since 2002

Richard Smith, since 1998

Sheila Wilkes, since 1984

2017

Stuart Bailey

Brainard Braimah MBE

Norma Connonier

Ian Charles MBE

Brenda Farara

Arthur France MBE

Yolo Frederick

Sheila Howarth

Debra Jeffers

Brian Phillips

Melvyn Zakers

Queen contestants and designers

1967

Vicky Cielto as The Sun Goddess, designed and made by Samlal Singh

Betty Bertie as The Snow Queen

A costume called The Gondola made by Wally Thompson

Gloria Viechwech as Cleopatra, designed and made by Willie Robinson

The fifth costume was called The Hawaiian Queen.

1974

Kim from Leeds, in a costume designed and made by Frederic Rawlins, James Brown and Michel

Paul, Eyonne from Leeds, costume designed and made by Edris Browne,

Sheila from Leeds, costume designed and made by Vince Wilkinson and Orville Hutchings,

Joanne from Leeds, costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor

Jennifer from Huddersfield, sponsored by the West Indian Steering Committee.

1975 Queens included:

A Samuel,

Jocelyn Bass

Iona Jeffers

Melvina Chapman

I George

1981 Queens included

Helen Richards

Teresa Thompson

Sheila Wilkes

Beverley Hutchinson

1982

Valerie Daley, sponsored by the Commission for Racial Equality in a costume designed and made by Arthur France and Gloria Pemberton

Leone Gordon, sponsored by 'The Hub' [youth club] in Sheffield in a costume designed and made by the members

Debra Blackwood, sponsored by Yorkshire Arts Association in a costume designed and made by Elaine Thomas

Pat Burt, sponsored by Leeds City Council in a costume designed and made by Edris and Cavell Browne

Joan Fishley, sponsored by Roseville Arts Centre, Leeds City Council, in a costume designed and made by Ken and Angela Wenham

Yvette Lake, sponsored by Leeds Community Relations Council, in a costume designed and made by Rita Williams

1983

Cavell Browne, sponsored by the Commission for Racial Equality, in a costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor, family and friends

Patricia Smith, sponsored by 'The Hub' [youth club] in Sheffield in a costume designed and made by 'MAS'

Brenda Monique, sponsored by Roseville Arts Centre, Leeds City Council, in a costume designed and made by Sharon Hall

Patsy Richards, sponsored by Leeds City Council in a costume designed and made by Kooler Ruler Sounds

Pamela Burt, sponsored by Yorkshire Arts Association in a costume designed and made by Arthur France

Yasmin Hack, sponsored by National Westminster Bank, in a costume designed and made by Hebrew Rawlins and Michael Paul

1984

Angela Carr, sponsored by Leeds City Council, in a costume designed and made by Hughbon Condor, family and friends

Sharon Hall, sponsored by Roseville Arts Centre, Leeds City Council, in a costume designed and made by herself and Ken Wenham

Carol Stapleton, sponsored by the Harehills Tech Centre, in a costume designed and made by Arthur France

Lorna Forest, sponsored by Yorkshire Arts Association, in a costume designed and made by Bradford Black People's Festival

Shirley Duffield, sponsored by the NatWest Bank, in a costume designed and made by Gloria Pemberton and friends

Daphne Robinson

1986

Julia Lewis in a costume designed by Violet Hendrickson and St Martin's Church

Lisa Condor in a costume designed by Hughbon Condor

Sarah Beckles in a costume designed by Leroy Norford

Sheila Howarth in a costume designed by Mr and Mrs Howarth

Sonia Mitchum in a costume designed by Alec McLeish

1987

Amarie Claxton in a costume titled Peacock designed and made by and Hughbon Condor Venetta Bassue and Julia Lewis

Heather Thompson (designed by the Apex Trust)

Rosie Young (designed by Teamwork)

Gay Gooding (designed by Arthur France)

Sharon Lewis (designed by Tyrone Ambrose)

Icilma Richards (designed and made by the Palace Youth Project)

The Queen Show judges this year were Sheila Wilkes, Dr Loss, Brenda Muskett, Leroy Wenham and Brian Braimah.

1989

Shirley Pratt, sponsored by Scaffolding (GB), in a costume designed by Mathew Stevens and St Aidan's Church

Cheryl James, sponsored by Yorkshire Arts, costume designed and made by Palace Youth Project

Nicola Shannon, sponsored by NatWest Bank, designed and made by Gloria Pemberton

Irma Norford, sponsored by MSC Training Agency, designed and made by St Martin's Church Group

Sheila Howarth/Wilkes, sponsored by Leeds City Council, designed and made by Kam Sangra

Ingrid Collins, sponsored by the West Indian Centre, designed and made by Arthur France

1992

Hazel Barker, sponsored by the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council, designed by Tyrone Ambrose

Denise Lazarus, sponsored by Appleton Estate Rum and the Grenada Association of Huddersfield, designed by Hughbon Condor

Norma May Douglas, designed by Alex Herbert from Manchester

Samantha Bedeau, sponsored by the Trinidad and Tobago Ladies Association of Huddersfield, designed and made by Matthew Gracelyn and friends

Michelle Johnson, sponsored by St Aidans Church, designed by the team of Betty John

Winsome Munroe, sponsored by Sheffield's Caribbean Fortnight and designed by Leroy Wenham and Pat Cohen

Jackie Conner, sponsored by Dragon Stout and Marlin Trading House Ltd and designed by Arthur France

Angela Weekes, sponsored by Leeds City Council and designed by Gloria Pemberton

Monica Campbell and Yonette Hooper, sponsored by Colorvision and designed by Marilyn James

1993

Odessa Ellis, designed by Alex Herbert from Manchester

Angela Nelson, sponsored by Leeds City Council and designed by Marlene Ambrose

Lisa Dionne Morris, sponsored by the Grenada Association of Huddersfield, designed by Hughbon Condor

Shirley Driffield, sponsored by Leeds Training and Enterprise Council and designed by Arthur France

Anna Lucas, sponsored by Sheffield's Caribbean Fortnight, designed by Leroy Wenham and made by Marie Lewis

Ayshea Henry, sponsored by Victoria Mutual Finance Ltd, designed and made by Leo and Yvette Smalle for Palace Youth Project

1996

Jacqui Gaskin, in a costume designed by Jacqui and Athaliah Durant

Claire Walwyn, in a costume she designed herself

Ophelia Clarke, designed by Derek Evelyn

Louise Norford, designed by Gloria Pemberton

Andrea Saunders, designed by Prakash (Mull) Bohorum.

Sabrina Collins, designed by Brenda Monique. [This was the winning costume, named Cygnet Serenade.]

Sandra David, designed by Marilyn James

1997

Venessa Benjamin, designed by Alan Julien

Angela Cameron, designed by Sheila Wilkes

Estelle Dick, designed by M&C Associates of Huddersfield
Stacey Morris, designed by Pamela Campbell [This was the winning costume, named Under the Witches Hat]
Justin Pike, designed by Debbie Partridge
Ann Price, designed by Val Fisher
Christine Taylor, designed by Melvin Zakers and Leroy Norford
Claire Walwyn, designed by herself
Carol Ward, designed by Matthew George
Raquel Wilkes, designed by Arthur France

1988

Simone Rawlins in a costume titled African Queen designed by Tyrone Ambrose and Gloria Pemberton
Estella Dick (Angel of the Night) designed by M&C Associate of Huddersfield
Monique Farara (aka Brenda Monique) (costume titled Snow Goddess) designed by Yola Farrell of Leeds. [This was the winning costume.]
Dalia Francis (Fire in the Gulf)]designed by Alex Herbert of Manchester
Nadine Thomas (Queen of the Elements) designed by Black Inspiration of Leicester
Sarnina Thomas (Queen of the Zodiac) designed by Tyrone Ambrose and Gloria Pemberton
Rachel Wilkes (Firebird) designed by Tyrone Ambrose of Leeds
Tania Wilkes (the Windrush Generation) designed by Nigel Wilkes, Sheila Howarth and Arthur France
Janet Gordon (Sweet Sweet Music) designed by Val Fisher and Pam Campbell from Leicester
Jo-Ann Alexander (Mystical Sun Goddess) designed by Delores Paterson from Leicester

1999

Delores Paterson in a costume called Bull Fight, designed by herself. From Leicester
Mahalia France (Mystery Bird of Paradise) designed by her father, Arthur France
Donna Odian (The Colour of Water) designed by Rhian Kempadoo-Millar for Mango Design, Leeds
Marilyn James (Sweet Harmony) which she designed herself
Candice Manifold (Queen Pterodactyl 2000) designed by Matthew George and Carl Ambrose for M&C Associates of Huddersfield
Rachel Wilkes (Mother Sun and her Dancing Daughter) designed by Sheila Howarth of Leeds
Gemma McEwan (Millennium Magic) by Professor Black for the Oaklands Centre, Birmingham

2000

Sarai Campbell (Carnival Paradise) designed by Vinod France, Romain Otley and Sarai Campbell of Leeds
Chantelle Davies (Queen of the Lily) by Cheryl James and Norma Cannonier of Leeds
Joanne Alexander (The Puppet Entertainer) by Leicester Parents' and Children's Centre
Shantel Grant (Queen Nandi) by Arthur France of Leeds
Trisha Bergen (The Tourist) by Trisha Bergen of Nottingham
Constance Smith (One Boonoonoonoos Gyal of the 70's) by Pam Campbell and Crew of Leicester
(Un-named contestant) as Millennium Bug by Alex Herbert of Manchester
Nelda Douglas as 'Millennium Butterfly' by Nelda Douglas of Manchester

Pauline Wilkes as Snow Queen by Sheila Howarth of Leeds
Racquel Wilkes as Ice Crystal by Bernie Wilkes of Leeds
Donna O'Dian as Madam Flutterbye by Rhian Kempadoo Miller and Alex Christie of Mango Design, Leeds.
Susie Calvert as D'Kukunas by Ruthvin Benjamin for Huddersfield Trinidad and Tobago Ladies Association
Candice Bernard as The Coral Reef by Hughbon Condor for the Caribbean Carnival Crusade of Huddersfield
Deneice Lazarus as The New Dawn by Hughbon Condor for Huddersfield Grenada Association
Yvette Robinson as Magicadabra by Professor Black of Birmingham

2015

Carnival Kings

Elroy Condor 'Flight of Fantasy' designed by ?Hughbon or Sefton Condor. First place
Lindon Nkomo 'The Lightning God' des Unity Carnival Arts ad Geraldine Connor Foundation. Second place
Charles 'Lion King' designed by the AA Team (includes Arthur France) Third place
Paul Walters 'Nevis' designed by Sinclair Brown
Andre Nugent 'Caribbean Wings of Life'

Queens

Angel Brown 'The Sun Goddess' by AA Team
Tamara Rushford 'Freedom of Youth' des Jessica Kemp and Laura Hill
Sharon Nicole Fogarty 'The Lost Atlantic' by Paige Phillips
Margaret Benjamin 'Motherhood' by Jessica Kemp and Laura Hill
Marie Marriott 'Jewels of the Caribbean' by Lincoln (Nottingham) Third place
Maureen Moseley 'Wisdom in Maturity'
Felicity Nkube 'Carnival Snow Queen' by the Geraldine Connor Foundation
Julia Russell 'Killer Fish' by Hughbon and Sefton Condor. Second place
Remish Nuggets Cameron 'Beauty Queens can Fly' by Primary Eye SCT
Sincere Parkinson 'Dizzle Dazzle Dis and Dat' by Professor Black (Birmingham)
Charis Betts 'The Dream Catcher', designed by Lincoln Rahamut and built by Charis Betts, Lincoln Rahamut, Anthony Deonarine and Athan Martin from Inspired Masquerade (Leicester). First place

2016

Kings

Lenard Carroll 'Journey of the Caribbean Rose' by Unity Carnival Arts and the Geraldine Connor Foundation (Leeds) First place
Hughbon Condor 'All Ah We' by Seph Condor of High Esteem Designs and ACE. Second place
Carl Harvey 'Toruk' by Tashi Brown for T&M Creative. Third place
Donald Henry 'Father of the Oceans' by Jessica Kemp and Laura Hill (Derby)
Andrew Pyle 'Fox Warrior' by Sara Blackburn and the Ablaze Youth Group
Dave Williams 'Watch Out' by Seph Condor of High Esteem Designs for Isles in Harmony

Queens

Charleene Clarke 'The Black Swan and her Daughter' by Unity Carnival Arts and the Geraldine Connor Foundation (Leeds) First place

Pareesha Webster 'Gateway to Wonderland' by Pareesha Webster of Valentina's Collective Second place

Marie Marriott 'Jewel of the Caribbean' by Lincoln Rahamut (Nottingham)

Sara Blackburn 'Queen of the Urban Tribe' by Sara Blackburn and the Ablaze Youth Group Third place

Maria Adlam 'Curio stolen from the sea' by Jessica Kemp and Laura Hill (Derby)

Sonia Merchant Stewart 'Camouflage' by Hughbon Condor of High Esteem Designs for Isles in Harmony

Pauline Mayers 'Queen Mother' by the AA Team (Leeds)

Mica Barrett 'Making Waves' by Jessica Kemp and Laura Hill (Derby)

APPENDIX

FURTHER READING

On the Leeds carnival

Yorkshire Life magazine (October 1970).

Chapelton News contains carnival photos in issues published between 1973 and 1976. Available at West Yorkshire Archive Service.

'Moving Here', a section of the National Archive Service, provides a digital record of photos of Leeds carnival, its brochures, and relevant copies of *Chapelton News*, supplied by Max Farrar in a project curated by Brett Harrison (2001). Available at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.movinghere.org.uk/>

Max Farrar (2001) 'A Short History of Leeds West Indian Carnival' West Yorkshire Archive Service. Available at www.maxfarrar.org.uk

Geraldine Connor and Max Farrar, Max (2003) 'Carnival in Leeds and London, UK: Making New Black British Subjectivities' in Riggio, Milla C (ed.) *Culture in Action*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). Available at www.maxfarrar.org.uk

Emily Zobel Marshall (2016) 'Carnival of the North' in *Caribbean Beat*. Issue 140, July/August 2016. Available at: <http://caribbean-beat.com/issue-140/word-of-mouth#axzz4R1UMKs3>

Yorkshire Post and *Yorkshire Evening Post* report on the Leeds carnival in the papers published over the Bank Holiday week-end, and/or the Tuesday afterwards. Available on microfiche in the Local Studies division of Leeds City Library.

Photo archives of Leeds carnival are also held by the contributors to this book.

On Carnival in the Caribbean

Andrew Pease 'Carnival in Nineteenth Century Trinidad', *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 4 March/June 1956.

Errol Hill *The Trinidad Carnival* (University of Texas Press, 1972; New Beacon Books, 1998).

Emily Zobel Marshall (2016) 'Resistance Through 'Robber Talk': Storytelling Strategies and the Carnival Trickster in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Volume 62 (Taylor and Francis).

Emily Zobel Marshall (2017) 'It's not all Sequins and Bikini's? Power, Performance and Play in the Leeds and Trinidad Carnival'. In Riggio, M (ed.) *Turning Tides*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers.

Rudolph Ottley (2016) *Ambataila Women — The untold story of women in calypso from chanterelle to calypsonian, 1834-2014*. ISBN 968 976 95524 3 2 Contact: rudy.ottley@gmail.com

Michael la Rose 'The City Could Burn Down We Jammin Still — The history and tradition of cultural resistance in the art, music, masquerade and politics of the Caribbean carnival'. Paper presented to the Power, Performance and Play conference at Leeds Beckett University (19-21 May 2017). Available at <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-areas/research-centres/centre-for-culture-and-the-arts/>

On the Notting Hill carnival

Abner Cohen (1993) *Masquerade Politics*. Oxford: Berg.

Darcus Howe (1978) *The Road Make to Walk on Carnival Day*. London: Race Today Publications.

Pax Nindi (ed.) (2003) *On Route — The Art of Carnival*. London: Arts Council England

Ishmahil Blagrove Jr (ed.) (2014) *Carnival — A Photographic and Testimonial History of the Notting Hill Carnival*. London: Rice n Peas.

On Rampage carnival arts in Luton

Pax Nindi (2011) *Rampage — In pursuit of Carnival Excellence*. Global Carnival Collective
www.rampagemasband.co.uk

On Steel Pan and Carnival Messiah

Geraldine Connor (2006) *!Halleluliah! Excursions into a third space – Carnival Messiah as an instrument of post-colonial liberation*. PhD thesis, Leeds University Library.

Geraldine Connor (2011) *Pan! — The Steelband Movement in Britain*. Gbakhanda Publishing
ISBN 978 1 874555-20-9.

See also The Geraldine Connor Foundation <http://gcfoundation.co.uk>

On Carnival for children

Ayo Jones and Rhian Kempadoo-Millar (2011) *Carnival!* Huddersfield: Primary Colours.
www.mangocreativearts.com

