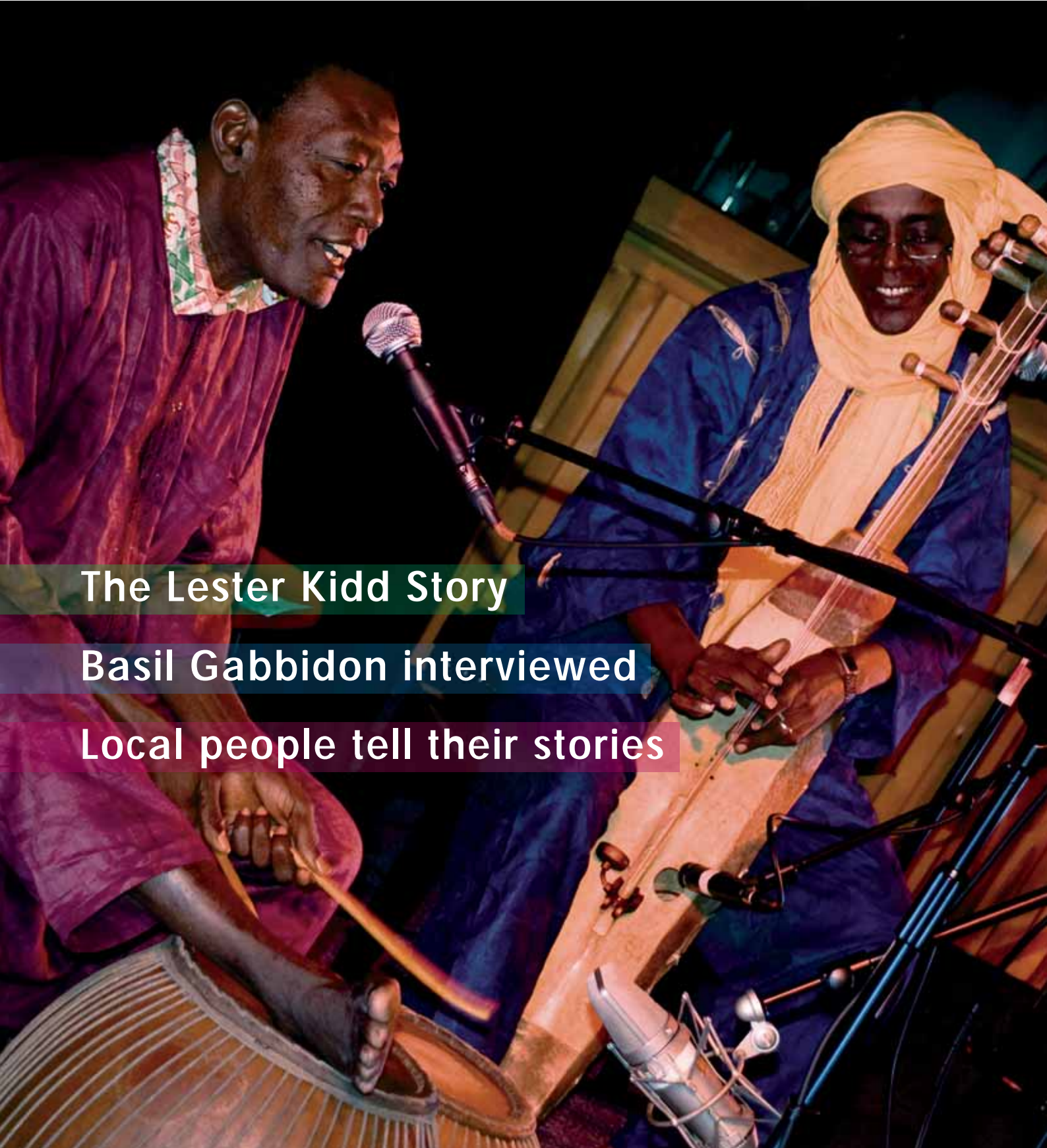


Hands on Handsworth



Issue 3
Spring 2011

A community magazine for Handsworth



The Lester Kidd Story

Basil Gabbidon interviewed

Local people tell their stories

Contact Your Local Councillor

Handsworth Wood Ward Councillors

Cllr Narinder Kooner
Chair Ward Committee
Tel: 0121 303 2039

Cllr Gurdial Singh Atwal
Chair Perry Barr Constituency Partnership
Tel: 07973726070

Cllr Paulette Hamilton
Chair Handsworth Partnership
Tel: 0121 303 2039

Lozells & East Handsworth Ward Councillors

Cllr Mahmood Hussain
Chair Ward Committee
Perry Barr Constituency Committee
Tel: 0121 551 7977

Cllr Hendrina Quinnen
Tel: 07895 599464

Cllr Don Brown
Tel: 0121 523 8509

Be a Community Journalist!

Get in touch if you want to help get the next issue out with writing, editing, photography or design. We are also looking for people to help us get advertising from local businesses.

Contact

Hands On Handsworth Facilitators:
Brian Homer 0121 5544
Karl Greenwood 0121 524 2135
Email: hoheditorial@gmail.com
Website: www.handsonhandsworth.info

Competition Time



Where was this picture taken?

Send us your answers.
Contact details are in the panel above.

Editorial

This third issue of the magazine marks an interesting and important step as it has been mostly written, edited and produced by a team of community journalists from Handsworth.

It is now confirmed that the Neighbourhood management programme will end on the 31st March 2011, so we are looking at ways of sustaining the Hands On Handsworth magazine and the blog at www.handsonhandsworth.info by developing a vibrant group to take on running these resources.

Already we have an active group who have contributed to this issue – see page 16 – and others are welcome to join.

We have secured some funding to continue for another three issues in 2011 and we will use this funding to provide some basic computer, recording and photographic kit. We will also be running some short specialist training sessions on writing, editing, photography and design. In addition there will be some sessions on digital storytelling.

We are also looking at a base for the magazine - possibly Handsworth Community Fire Station and we are setting up an independent organization with a steering group to coordinate the smooth running of the magazine.

Get in touch with ideas, feedback or if you want to join the team of community journalists.

Brian Homer

Facilitator

Thanks to Tracey Thorne, Neighbourhood Manager for Handsworth and to Karl Greenwood and Chloe Brown from Multistory for their ongoing support for this initiative. And particular thanks goes also to **Councillor Paulette Hamilton**, Chair of the Handsworth Neighbourhood Partnership who has supported this initiative locally and is keen to see community journalism developed here in Handsworth.

This edition has been produced through funding made available from Handsworth Wood Ward Committee, Lozells & East Handsworth and Urban Living.

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Cover picture: Oumarou Adamou & Mamane Barka at CMAT by Jesse Gerald

Handsworth Remembers

From the lofty spires of Oxford to a garden shed

The tragic death of Lester Kidd and how the Handsworth community came together to give Lester the funeral he deserved.

From the lofty spires of Oxford to a tragic end in a garden shed, the life of Lester Kidd holds many contradictions and unanswered questions. How did an Oxford graduate end up in such a desperate situation?

The full story may never be known, but what we do know, he was a well known, and treasured member of the Handsworth community, and his death had a huge impact on those that knew him.

Lester Kidd was born in 1935, St Marys, Jamaica he came to

England with his father in the late fifties and settled down in Handsworth where he spent most of his life, he was 76 years old when he died.

After graduating from Oxford he became quite a successful businessman, so successful in fact that he was able to own a Ford Zephyr car, that was quite an achievement for a black man in those days. Those who knew Lester in his early years remember Lester not only as an intelligent individual, but a man who enjoyed life, he was a great dancer and loved to sing.

Dextry Kidd 2nd cousin to Lester said, "Lester was an Oxford graduate and extremely successful, running his own business in his 20s, but he suffered from mental health problems and things deteriorated. He lost everything. It is a real shame, but it is incredible how everyone has pulled together. Lester was a great man, I didn't know him very well but as a child I remember he always gave me money for sweets. When I heard what happened to him it was a real shock. He was so active even in his 70s."

Lester Kidd was locked out of his flat in Crocketts Road after a mix up with his benefits. It was a bitter November night in 2009 and he sought shelter in a garden shed in Mostyn Road. It is thought he lit a fire in the shed to keep warm, and was tragically overcome by smoke. His body was found by fire fighters who were called to tackle the fire, paramedics at the scene were unable to revive him.

On news of his death the community was mobilised by Delores Pinkney, and her brother Hector, local community leaders from the Dojo community project, and other concerned members of the community.

As Lester didn't have any immediate family, the local community came together to raise the money needed to ensure that he received, a decent funeral. Over £2500 was raised by the community.

Delores Pinkney at the time said, "What Happened to Lester was tragic and when it was suggested at a meeting that he might have to have a state – funded funeral I felt very sad. We couldn't let that happen, we had to show some dignity."

Alex Clarke



One year on Handsworth remembers Lester Kidd

A Memorial Service was held at Cannon Street Memorial Baptist church on Saturday 6th November for Lester Kidd, a local man, who died in tragic circumstances November 8th 2009.

The service was conducted by Pastor Bryan Rose, and attended by the local community who had turned up to show their support, and pay their respects to Lester.

Delores Pinkney of the Dojo Community Project, who led the community fundraising initiative, thanked the community for their show of unity and generous support for Lester, she made special mention of the numerous businesses along Soho Road who also contributed to the success of the fundraising effort. In the end enough money was raised to

provide a decent funeral and headstone for Lester.

Also we were updated on the plans of the Lester Kidd Foundation set up in Lester's name, which aims to help and support members of the local community who may suffer similar hardships and difficulties Lester did.

The Foundation will be headed by Pastor Bryan Scott of Cannon Street Memorial Baptist Church, Soho Road. The Foundation would welcome your continuing help, support, and donations, to help others in need, now and in the future.

A 2 disc set of the funeral service is available from Cannon St Memorial Baptist church for £5.00. The DVDs were filmed and edited by Raymond Brown for Star Apple Media Productions 07817980687 in conjunction with B.I.G Video Services 07816350624



TRIBUTES

"Lester was a man from this community who was well loved. He was a man of great humility who lived a simple life. He blessed this community for the last forty years or more. Because of his nature, he has left a legacy to the community, of compassion, of empathy, of caring and sharing. He was in essence an icon in this community, he helped so many people, in different ways. Whether it was simply carrying a shopping bag to the car, or whether it was helping someone by cleaning their backyard. He helped so many of us in this community, Lester has gone but he wont be forgotten. He will be missed, but he will always be remembered, and well loved by this community."

Pastor Bryan Scott
(Cannon Street Baptist Memorial Church)

"In Loving memory of Lester who departed this life one sad year. May your memory live on. Rest in peace, gone but not forgotten."

Winnie McCalla

"In loving memory of Lester. Hope you are resting in peace."

Sister Gloria

"RIP Lester."

Dr Love

"I'll remember good thoughts of a very lovely man, who was a credit to our community. God bless you Lester."

Owen

Sculpture in the Park

Escape from the hustle and bustle of Soho Road

Waverhill Park is a small green space lying in the heart of the Handsworth community, surrounded by residential houses and just off the hustle and bustle of Soho Road.

The park has been affected in recent years by anti-social behaviour and people drinking alcohol on the site, which has created an intimidating and unwelcoming environment for local residents, resulting in the park being underused and not functioning as a space for the community to relax, play and enjoy.

The Soho Finger and Gib Heath Neighbourhood Manager, Colin Hanno has been working closely with West

Midlands Police to address these issues and have made rapid progress over the past 18 months.

Planet Art were brought in to add value to the work done so far and develop ways of further improving the park and its usage. Planet Art is an arts partnership based in the Midlands run by Julie Edwards & Ron Thompson. Planet Art delivered over 20 design workshops with local schools and community groups and took part in numerous resident consultations and events, reaching out to over 1000 people in the neighbourhood.

This process enabled Planet Art to gather a wealth of information and ideas from the community which were then used to create 6 shortlisted designs for a permanent piece of art to be installed within the park that would reflect and honour the social and physical landscape of the area and give people a sense of ownership and pride over the park.

The designs were displayed at events in the area, for the general public to vote for their favourite and therefore decide on the final artwork. The winning design was a globe which symbolised the community's diversity and togetherness.

A celebratory event took place in the park in November 2010 where over 100



people watched as the sculpture was unveiled.

Planet Art worked closely with local people and West Midlands Police to ensure that other improvements were also made in the park such as planting and cleaning up litter. A 'Friends Group' has also been formed for the park so that the park as a space for the community to enjoy and will go from strength to strength.

What local residents think

"Waverhill Park is an escape from the hustle and bustle of Soho Road. It sits only fifty metres away but it is as peaceful as a country meadow."

"There's a lot of change in this park. You sense it as soon as you come in. The bushes have been cut back so it makes the park a lot safer."

"Producing a sculpture and having the experience of a practising local artist which the children can identify with has been marvellous and an invaluable life experience. It's something our children will be able to show their grandchildren."



A Road Under Gods

Photographer Liz Hingley revisits Soho Road in her latest work

Soho Road is part of a three mile stretch that contains over 30 religious buildings and is home to representatives from many of the 90 different nationalities living in Birmingham. Photographer Liz Hingley grew up in the city and has always been fascinated by this cultural melting pot of religions and ethnicities.

In her latest project - named Under Gods: Stories from Soho Road - she lived with and photographed members of different ethnic communities. She focused on their varying attitudes to faith and practices of religion. Her photographs show the variety of religions and the times when people of different faiths come together.

Hingley says that the experience of going from home to home along the Soho Road was both interesting and exciting: "Often it was like visiting another country behind the front door."

Each year, prominent members of each religion in Birmingham are brought together for a harmonious meal and discussion at the Birmingham Faiths Forum. This interested Hingley, as she saw the dinner as representing of the coming together of the huge range of faiths in the city.

When asked why she chose Soho Road, Hingley says: "I was interested in the changing religious landscape of the urban environment... places with as many religions as possible." Hingley says that she wanted to celebrate and make a lasting documentation of the beauty religious and cultural diversity can bring to everyday inner city life .

The collection of photographs will be on display in the Wolverhampton Art Gallery until Saturday the 26th of February 2011.

Lauren Archer



Safe and Sound

Police employ new technology in the battle against gun crime

Technology used to detect sniper fire in Afghanistan and Iraq may soon be used nearer home

Police in North West Birmingham are trialling ShotStopper for the first time in the UK. The test location is being kept secret but is believed to be in the Handsworth/Lozells area.

ShotStopper uses sensors to detect the exact noise and vibrations that a gunshot produces, and can pinpoint the site to within 10 metres. It then sends this information to a police

computer screen, allowing a much more urgent response. Police hope it will cut gun crime and save lives. The team behind ShotStopper say it can distinguish between static and moving gunshots, and even between gunshots and similar sounds, such as cars backfiring.

Inspector Kevin Borg of West Midlands Police, the man behind the UK introduction of ShotStopper said: "We may not get 999 calls every time a gun is fired, as members of the public are sometimes scared and may not want to report gunfire in case of reprisals. But we now don't have to wait for a member of the public to dial 999; we'll know when a gun is fired."



The project has been funded by the Safer Birmingham Partnership, which includes West Midlands Police and Fire Service, Birmingham City Council and other agencies. The system costs £135,000 and will cost £28,850 a year to run.

But don't expect a sudden drop in gun crime numbers, Borg warned: "We could get a spike in the number of gunshots recorded because every gun shot in the area will be captured by the sensors, but once we start responding there should be a reduction in the number of shootings as criminals begin to see we are getting to the scene of a shooting very quickly and getting an increase in conviction rates."

ShotStopper is already having a huge impact in America. As US Police Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey said: "The system is not designed to make arrests, it's designed to change behaviour." The hope is that as gang members and criminals become aware of ShotStopper, the number of firearm offences will fall dramatically.

Lauren Archer & Mick Archer



Burning Issues

An Interview with Steve Lees Station Commander at Handsworth Fire Station

Hands on Handsworth recently caught up with Steven Lees the Station Commander at Handsworth Fire Station. Steve has served in the fire service for almost twenty years; ten of those years have been spent in service to the Handsworth community.

Steve begins by explaining why there was a need for a new fire station in Handsworth, "the old fire station at Stafford Road was unable to fully cater for the work amongst the young and all the different community groups." It was also imperative for communities in Handsworth, Lozells, The Albion Ground the back end of Sandwell and Smethwick to have a new station that was fit for the twenty first century. "They needed a station where they could come and interact and learn about fire, fire safety and all the other aspects of community life," says the Station Commander.

This summer the station marked 10 years since Handsworth Community Fire station opened in 2000. The new station located on Rookery Road was the first of its kind in Europe. "This is a testimony to the people of Handsworth. The local councillors, MPs and communities wanted a station that was fit for purpose and perhaps unique. They have achieved that. Besides delivering its core services, Handsworth's fire station has a strong focus on education, community involvement and raising awareness. "The station is truly interactive, and we



can cater for all age ranges. We have pilates and karate classes, first aid courses and young fire fighters come here. We also do a lot of work with the newly arrived communities to help them speak English and get familiar with the country."

Steve feels very strongly that everyone should feel included in the community. "We should all be as one. David Cameron keeps saying that we should be the big society. I like to think that in Handsworth we are already there, and the fire service is an integral part of this."



The station is fast becoming a model for other stations across the country to emulate. Here in the West Midlands at Vauxhall they now have a new fire station called "Safe Side", a bigger version of Handsworth Fire Station. The Vauxhall site has a mini shopping village, a canal barge, they teach young children and adults all about safety in one location, and it is used by many external agencies. "They have built on what we have here and it has got bigger and better. What we have at Handsworth is also being replicated in other parts of the country, numerous fire brigades have visited us to see if they can duplicate what we have here."

As a last word Steve urges readers to visit Handsworth Community Fire station. "It is free; the community fire safety centre is open Monday to Friday until 5pm or later if a community event is on. Please come along and ask to see the facilities, you can gain a lot of literature about all sorts of things but more importantly you can start to feel safe and we can work with you to make you feel safe."

Ankhobia Carvalho

The Road to Reggae

Our Stories Our Lives

Gaelle Finley interviews Handsworth musician Basil Gabbidon

Basil Gabbidon is a founder member of Steel Pulse, the phenomenally successful reggae band formed in Handsworth in the 70s. He was born in Buff Bay, Portland (Jamaica) and moved to Britain in 1964 when he was eight years old. He has been a Handsworth resident for most of his life. The following interview marks the relaunch of his most recent album, 'Reggae Rockz.'

What are your earliest memories of music?

I started listening to music on the radio, then listened to Jamaican music such as Ska and Bluebeat on the jukebox in the café I used to go to after school. This was a big influence as I got older.

How did you get involved in music?

I went to Handsworth Wood Boys School, where I learned to read music and play the trombone. I also taught myself to play the guitar. I wasn't so much into the Beatles but I did like the Stones. I was interested in revolutionary music such as Jimi Hendrix and a Funk band called Mandrill.

What reggae artists first inspired you and why?

Niney's 'Blood and Fire' first got me into reggae. I also liked John Holt, though I was always more interested in bands than singers. I liked roots music and heavy dub, and anything that expanded creativity.

What about Bob Marley?

Bob Marley and the Wailers were a major influence. When they came along, I realised they were just up my street. They



were different as they had guitar solos, which reggae didn't have before. And of course the lyrics were different too; they were revolutionary. When 'Catch a Fire' came out, Bob Marley became a cornerstone, the man for reggae. He, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer spread the music all round the world and brought different cultures together more than any other genre.

Do you have a favourite song by him?

I love 'Concrete Jungle', the mystical nature of it. It was poetically written, in a different way than the conventional way of writing songs, and of course the guitar solo is fantastic.

Apart from reggae, have other artists inspired you?

Jimi Hendrix was a great inspiration – the guitar playing, the attitude, the torment... He made it seem so easy. It was as far away from classical music as you could get, but he was very classical in a way, very cosmic in his approach to playing, like jumping off a cliff. His message seemed to be 'Free yourself'.



How did Steel Pulse come about?

Around 1976, David Hynes, Ronnie McQueen and I used to rehearse after school, about twice a week. My brother Colin joined us on drums and Selwyn Brown on keyboards. We didn't play gigs then; we just enjoyed playing together. In 1977, we started playing gigs at the Crompton pub, off Heathfield Road. Ronnie found our name. He enjoyed a bet and had noticed a horse called Steel Pulse. We all agreed it was a great name for the band.

Tell us about the album 'Handsworth Revolution'

Our first big break was in 1977, when we were asked to play with Burning Spear as support at the Rainbow in London. We looked different, as we had made our own costumes: African robe, witch doctor, preacher and prisoner. We designed them ourselves, with animals and the colours red, gold and green. No one had seen anything like that before and that helped to get us noticed. The gig was sponsored by Island Records and as soon as we came off stage we got signed by them. The first record we did for Island was in 1978. 'Handsworth Revolution' was produced from Jamaica by Karl Pitterson, who had engineered some of Bob Marley's albums. We had plenty of songs already, but the album came about because of what was going on at the time – racism, the police taking advantage of their position. People's feelings in Handsworth rubbed off on us.

Why did you leave Steel Pulse?

I was mentally exhausted. We toured, recorded, toured, recorded, non stop. I wanted to stop for six months, to recharge my batteries and reconnect with people, but I couldn't. I left in 1981. I have no doubt in my mind that if I'd been able to have that break, I would have continued with the band.

Do you collaborate with any other bands or musicians?

I have worked with Buju Banton, Musical Youth, Ranking Roger from 'The Beat', and Dennis Bovell.

Can you give us a snapshot of your recent career?

After Steel Pulse, I had a break until I formed Bass Dance in 1985, with my brother Colin and other musicians. Then around 2003, I started a joint project with Birmingham Symphony Hall, called Reggae Rockz, which charted the history of reggae – a kind of musical journey from Africa to our day. We performed regularly at Artsfest on Centenary Square. I'm also a producer and have my own studio, where I produced the Reggae Rockz album. My present band, Gabbidon, consists of myself on guitar and vocals, Colin on drums, Paul Beckford (who used to play with Burning Spear) on bass, Israel on keyboards, Errol and Alvin on brass, Candice and Anne Marie on backing vocals.

What are you up to now?

I work in an inner city school, doing music technology,

helping children to produce music. I also produce Gabbidon and other bands. I write lyrics, play guitar, a bit of electric piano and trombone too.

What tips would you give any budding musician?

You can do it if you work hard. The more hours you put in, the better you sound. And the better you sound, the more people like you. The more people like you, the more they buy your records! Another tip, and it's an important one, is never wear too dark glasses on stage – it's not clever to notice that a piece of the stage has been removed just as you fall down! Believe me it happens; I should know!

Main pictures: Catherine Beroard-Gabbidon



A Migration Story

From Grenada to England for Love

It was love that bought Shirley to the UK and so she stayed, marrying Joseph Toussaint in December of 1969.

Shirley Brenda Toussaint was born in the parish of St David, in the island of Grenada and she came to the UK to get married in 1969 at the age of 28 on her birthday.

Arriving in the cold winter month of December, she faced the shock of being greeted by harsh weather: "Oh my gosh you must be joking! I came from the hot to the cold and to think that love brought me here," she recalls laughing, "but I knew that God would be with me in this freezing weather, I even thought that the snow on the floor was white flowers, of course now I

know that it was snow." She hated the rain she said and I so wanted to go back to the Caribbean."

Moving to Wales

At first Shirley settled in the capital city of Wales – Cardiff. She liked Cardiff very much and found the people very nice, although the food was very different from what she was accustomed to in the Caribbean. She also found working in the factory environment very challenging as she experienced discrimination firsthand. Looking back she laughs at how she would see smoke coming out of the chimneys on her way to work. Luckily her husband Joseph assured her that the factories were not burning down. It was just smoke coming from people's chimneys.

Self-Employment

From an early age Shirley had aspirations to be an independent woman. Starting at the tender age of ten her mother taught her how to sew. She loved it so much that she decided she wanted to be a seamstress when she was older. Even now people knock on her door to have their clothes custom made by her. She also ran a café for a few years, whilst her husband worked as a builder.

Moving to Birmingham

After spending twenty plus years in Wales, Shirley moved to Birmingham where her children lived. Shirley still longs for the home that she calls the Caribbean. She last visited Grenada in 2006 to attend her brother's funeral. She would love to go back to the Caribbean but for now she is content to call Handsworth her home.

Aneno Rogol



The Queen of Wilkes Green

As the chair of Wilkes Green Residents Association, Sonia Hyman has a key responsibility in representing the needs of local people, keeping them abreast of issues and relaying their concerns to local government and the police. We discover the collaborative nature of the work that she and her team do in order to help improve the area.

For over 25 years, the Wilkes Green Residents Association has played a pivotal role in boosting the properties and surroundings for people who live and work within a small catchment area, covering a number of streets surrounding the parish of Saint Andrew's Church on Oxhill Road:

"Over the years we have provided a range of services, from installing smoke alarms and window locks, to campaigning for speed bumps and security gates."

The project works well because of the good relationships fostered between Sonia and her team, in conjunction with law enforcement and local government. The ordinary public sometimes find police difficult to approach, and the association builds bridges between the two parties by using Community Police Support Officers (PCSOs), so that the concerns that matter reach their attention:

"We try to build effective links in the community. People are not always as forthcoming when police are present, so PCSOs act as a useful mediator between residents and the police themselves."



Amazingly, the work that the Wilkes Green Residents Association does is independent of any public funding: "We don't get any money such as grants or bursaries. All we receive is £1 from each household, which enables us to produce a newsletter three times a year, keeping them informed of as much as we can mention. We take no expenses for telephone calls, but just do it because it is something which is greatly needed in the vicinity."

Moving into 2011 brings new challenges for Sonia and the association, but also the determination to persevere with tackling long-standing issues: "Some of my hopes for the forthcoming year are to take further strides to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime" she says. There is also a growing sense of despair and frustration amongst young people: "It is a major concern that the youths don't have anywhere to go and socialise. Because of this they end up hanging out on the streets."

Being crowned with a Pride of Handsworth award acknowledging the work done was certainly one of the highlights for Sonia this year: "The award, although received by me, was really for the people I work with and for the residents. It is a testament that we care for the area we live in and are prepared to help make it better."

Anyone interested in expressing their views are welcome to attend the regular Wilkes Green Residents Association meeting, which takes place on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7.30pm at Laurel Road Community Centre.

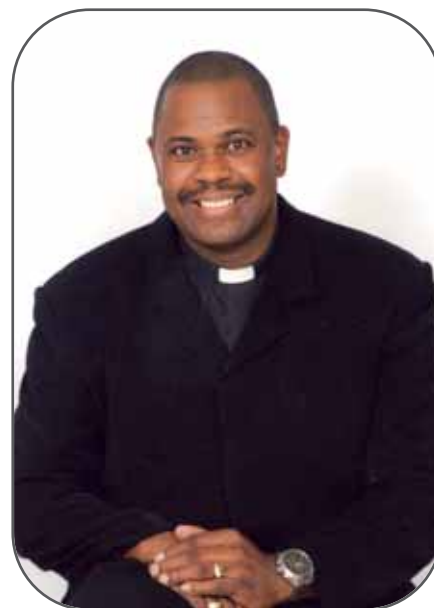
Kevin Thompson

From Man's Army to God's Army

When Bryan Scott stands up in front of his congregation on Sunday mornings, many of them may think he has been a pastor all his life. However, they could not be more wrong. He has, in fact, had a long and distinguished military career with the RAF.

One of two children, born on Murdock Road in Handsworth, Bryan had a very happy childhood. He fondly remembers his early years at Wilkes Green Junior School. Unfortunately he was denied a grammar school place after passing his 11 + examination, but disappointment did not dampen his determination and he went on to achieve good academic success at Hamstead Hall Comprehensive School.

Aged 16, Bryan joined the RAF to do an engineering apprenticeship, making the most of all the opportunities available, he saw service all over the world. He served in Scotland at RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Wittering, RAF Valley in Wales, and a considerable time in Germany and Northern Ireland. He also saw action in the Falkland Islands and the 1991 Gulf War.



Bryan had a long and prosperous career in the RAF and his final years were spent managing the RAF Careers Information Office in Birmingham City Centre and daily outreach to schools, colleges, universities and local communities, raising awareness of the career opportunities available to young people.

On being stationed in Birmingham, Bryan returned to the local Baptist church in Handsworth that he attended as a child.

Bryan left the RAF in 2002 after 24 years of service and a very successful career. He then embarked on a four-year theology degree course to become a Baptist Minister. Just as he completed his course, he was ordained as a pastor of Cannon Sreet Memorial Baptist Church.

Bryan describes his appointment as "coming home, back to the Church where I first encountered God as a child."

Bryan has come full circle, back into the community that he grew up in. As he said: "Instead of recruiting for the RAF, I am now recruiting for the Kingdom of God!"

Wilfred Thorpe & Desmond Charles



Branching Out

New Morrisons opening in Handsworth

The new Morrisons being built on the Holyhead Road by the junction with Island Road is set to have a big impact on the shopping habits for both Handsworth residents and for people from the surrounding area.

We went to ask local supermarkets on Holyhead Road in Handsworth what they thought of a new Morrisons opening. We also spoke to some shoppers to gauge their reaction.

We spoke to three general stores and received a mixed response. Mr Aziz's response to the arrival of shopping giants Morrisons and how it would impact on his business was: "I've no idea how it's going to affect our business until its open but it is a good idea that Morrisons is opening as my store sells different products e.g. Fresh Naan Bread and I don't think I will be affected."

Mr Singh of S. Wines & Groceries commented how the government has encouraged shopkeepers to apply for permits for off licences. Now the government wants businesses to cut down on the sale of cigarettes and alcohol. "Morrisons prices can be cheaper than cash & carry. I buy a Smirnoff at £14 and they sell it for £10." He continued: "I think that we will not be able to compete, us small businesses. It will affect families. Nobody listens to you, no matter how many articles are done."

Mr Hussain of Sabar General Store commented on how he will be "broken into pieces." He feels that Morrisons

will affect his business, as "they are big boys and I am a small business." He would prefer if Morrisons had decided to open elsewhere as he will not be able to compete. "When they open we will check their prices." He feels that there is nothing positive about Morrisons opening here where other smaller businesses already exist.

As might be expected the two shoppers we spoke to were more positive. Errol Brown, 54 thought he would definitely shop at Morrisons: "I feel good because it's a good thing, it's welcome. I will use it for whatsoever they have to offer but it will not affect my shopping style, it will add to my choice of shops. I will still continue to use other shops for different items because they are nearer and easy to reach for single items." He also said that he would drive to Morrisons for shopping and would shop there often.

Ms N Harris, 49 was also positive: "I'm glad because we needed a supermarket in the area, our closest at the moment is in Perry Barr." She also said that she would definitely use Morrisons for grocery shopping but she didn't expect it to change her

shopping routine: "I will do my normal grocery shopping. The only thing that would change is the travelling distance."

She thought she would use her local smaller shops for odd items during the week and thought she would drive to Morrisons twice a month. "My expectation is to see better prices than other leading supermarkets."

The new store opens in early 2011 and apart from the effect on existing businesses and shoppers there are up to 200 new jobs being created – some of which will go to local people. In addition local schools and communities have been given the chance to showcase their creative talents by developing a piece of artwork that will be displayed in a new supermarket.

We contacted Morrisons Press Office for a comment but they had not responded by the time we went to press.

What do you think about the new store? Contact us by letter, online or by email.

Ozma Shazia & Tanisha Shirley



Frankfurt Festivities

Although it's in the City Centre many Handsworth residents head for the Frankfurt Christmas Market.

Situated by the Town Hall and the Council House, a trail of stalls offer the best in beer, mulled wine, crepes and the renowned frankfurters. The Market never fails to bring genuine German uniqueness to town. Apart from food and drinks, other stalls are decorated with scented candles, authentic mantle pieces and ornaments, alongside many homely essentials, which could be the perfect gift for a friend or family member.

Amongst the mini shops are the friendly traders who are willing to give advice on their products and assist you when necessary. It is easy to get distracted with the colourful stands, Christmas decorations and the busy crowd, so I'm certain that these survival

tips will allow you to be more prepared for next year.

Tip 1

Wrap up warm but if you do forget your hats and gloves you will be certain to find a trendy set on the stalls.

Tip 2

Don't purchase the first thing you see - check out the competition and shop around and remember it is a market so it is highly unlikely to get a receipt.

Tip 3

If you see it buy it! There is nothing worse than seeing something that is a must-have for it to be snapped up by a shopping rival.

Tip 4

Plan before you buy. This is the best way to save your pounds. If you know what you want, you've got a good

chance of escaping the lunch time and evening crowds.

Tip 5

Feeling peckish? Eat straight away as queuing will reduce your enjoyment.

Tip 6

Don't make shopping a chore. Have a break with a hot chocolate and good company before you complete the last half of the festive trail through the stalls.

Tip 7

If you have children, the merry-go-round is a must, though adults can go on it too!

Now you know how to survive the market and walk out with a smile still on your face, you are officially ready for next year.

Candice Bergan, words and Tanisha Shirley, pictures



One of a Kind

Rarely has the expression one of a kind been as true as at CMAT on 17 November 2010 when Mamane Barka from Niger played the biram, accompanied by Oumarou Adamou on percussion.

Mamane is the one and only musician in the world keeping alive the traditions of the Boudouma people from the shores of Lake Chad in South East Niger. The Boudouma rely on the lake and its fish to make their living and still keep their traditional customs and revere the spirit of the lake. But the young men are no longer drawn to the old musical traditions. By 2002 there was only one old master of the biram, Bouka Tar.

Despite being from a nomadic Saharan tribe, Mamane, a teacher, musician and musical scholar, was drawn to the Boudouma. He heard about Boukar who had not played for 15 years and in 2002 he sought him out and asked him to teach him the biram. But this was not just a learning process, it was an initiation. There were rituals of purification and a process of finding the right materials for a new biram.

The biram is a kind of harp made out of wood and the hide of a cow. In 2005 Mamane played in Morocco – the first time a biram had ever left Niger. While there he learned of Boukar's death and became the sole remaining master of the biram.

Since then he has been on a mission to spread the word (and music) about the biram and he has toured around the world. And with his friend Oumarou has written the first new songs for the biram in many, many years.

The biram has a curious floating and yet percussive sound. Some people have described it as sounding like water. In concert Mamane and Oumarou are mesmerising. The music is very accessible with Mamane's voice light and ringing above the percussion and the strong sound of the biram. In places you can almost hear rap-like figures in the vocals.

And despite professing little English (his third or fourth language) Mamane was eloquent and talked at length and in fascinating detail about the biram. It was a strange sensation to realise that you were listening to the one and only biram player in the world playing one of only two birams in existence. The old master's biram is now in a museum in Niger. Long may he promote this unique instrument and the culture of the Boudouma people

Words: Brian Homer Photo: Jesse Gerald



About CMAT

CMAT itself is also a one of a kind, a unique venue in Handsworth that serves the local community but has wider links with Birmingham and with world music. It has rehearsal spaces, recording studios and training rooms and is based at refurbished premises at the old Hollick and Taylor studios in Grosvenor Road. CMAT has been threatened by the planned withdrawal of its Arts Council grant in March 2011. The event on 17th November was intended to mark its closure but the good news is that the decision to close has now been reversed by the Board. There is confidence that, with support, CMAT will be sustainable. CMAT will be working to strengthen its links with the community and there will be plenty of opportunities for people to get involved. Contact Tamala Ramdhanie at CMAT and see what is on offer.

Links Mamane Barka CD available at www.mamanebarka.com

CMAT 16 Grosvenor Road, Handsworth B20 3NP.
Tel: 0121 331 4746 www.cmatltd.co.uk

Hands on Journalism



A group of Handsworth residents have been honing their writing, photography and design skills, resulting in most of the content for this issue of the magazine.

The idea is that the group, and others who might want to get involved, will take over running Hands On Handsworth from Tracey Thorne, the Neighbourhood Manager.

Tracey is keen to see how the magazine and associated website can continue, with the participation of local people, after the funding for the current neighbourhood program runs out on the 31st March 2011.

"I've always wanted Hands On Handsworth to be the voice of the community rather than being just about the area. If my work in

Handsworth finishes I'll be keen to keep in touch and help out."

The enthusiastic Hands On Handsworth group first met at a Local Democracy Week session in Handsworth Library on 16th October 2010 and they carried on meeting weekly through to December. At the meetings the team developed a list of stories and then wrote the stories and taken photographs.

The project has been run by Multistory, a community arts organization based in West Bromwich and funded through Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Management in Handsworth. The sessions have been facilitated by Brian Homer of Homer Creative with the support of Karl Greenwood and Chloe Brown from MultiStory.

Brian Homer commented: "It's great to be working back in Handsworth again as it is where my career in design, photography and writing really started. We've got a really good group from different backgrounds and with ages from 10 to over 70."

As well as producing stories for the magazine the group will be recording material including sound and video to go on the Hands On Handsworth website.

Get in touch!

As this issue went to press it was confirmed that enough funding has been secured to continue the project for a further three issues of the magazine during 2011. So if you want to add your name to the list of contributors get in touch with the group - see inside front cover.



Handsworth

Pictures by Tanisha Shirley



Useful Contacts

Keeping Your Neighbourhood Safe and Clean

Missed Refuse Collections
0121 303 1112

For Cleaning or Litter Picking on Your Street
0121 303 1112

Fly Tipping and Dumped Rubbish
0121 303 1112

Bulky Waste Free Collection
0121 303 1112

Pest Control
0121 303 6007

Abandoned Cars
0121 303 1112

Your Local Neighbourhood Police Teams

Handsworth Wood
03845 113 5000
ext 7812 6555

Soho
03845 113 5000
ext 7811 6510

East Handsworth
03845 113 5000
ext 7841 6541

Other Numbers

Anti-Social Behaviour
0121 303 1111

Crime Stoppers
0800 555 111

Domestic Violence
(Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid)
0800 0732 606

Drug and Alcohol Action Team Helpline
0800 073 0817

Childline
(get advice & support on a wide range of issues)
0800 1111

Anawim (Women's Project)
0121 507 1112

NHS Direct
0845 46 47

Your Local Neighbourhood Manager

Tracey Thorne
Handsworth Community Fire Station
41 Rookery Road,
Handsworth, Birmingham
B21 9QU
0121 303 3401
tracey.thorne@birmingham.gov.uk