

Appendix B

Culture, Community and Activism Black British History in London

Further links

- The Huntley's archives are available to view at the [London Metropolitan Archives](#)
- Friends of the Huntley Archives at [London Metropolitan Archives group and events](#)
- John Agard learning for KS2 on [BBC's School Radio](#)
- Valerie Bloom's [resources for children](#)
- Lemn Sissay documentary [on YouTube](#) (for older audiences)
- The London Metropolitan Archives offers free outreach sessions on this topic to secondary schools, that can be delivered online.

How to submit recordings to LMA

All the recordings in this resource were digitised by the London Metropolitan Archives as part of the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project, which aims to preserve and provide access to thousands of the UK's rare and unique sound recordings.

LMA will be collecting and archiving voices for years to come to preserve the perspective of young people in in the 2020s on the social context of the 1980s and to track how attitudes and values change over time.

If your students recorded their opinions as part of Lesson 4 – The Power of OUR Voices, then you can submit the recordings to be part of the archive by emailing them to LMA Learning@cityoflondon.gov.uk. Recordings would be anonymized.

Audio clips and transcripts

Links to all the audio clips are included in the power point slide deck for each lesson (Appendix A), but see a full list below with links and in the following pages a transcript for each.

Lesson 1:

- [Eric Huntley speaking at Ealing Town Hall in 1986](#)
- [Dr Waveney Bushell, the first black Education Psychologist speaking at the conference](#)
- [Nesta Speed, one of the adults present at the conference](#)

Lesson 2:

- [Poet and publisher John La Rose talking about publishing in the Caribbean](#)

Lesson 3:

- [Poet and publisher John La Rose talking about expressing your being](#)
- [Lucinda Roy: 'If You Know Black Hair'](#)
- [Lemn Sissay: 'African Metaphor'](#)
- [John Agard: 'Everytime I Talk Me Talk](#)
- [Lucinda Roy: 'Yuh Hear Bouf'](#)

Eric Huntley speaking at Ealing Town Hall in 1986

Speaker: Eric Huntley, born 1929

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications LMA003/15

Event: Recorded by Eric Huntley at home in preparation for speaking at Ealing Town Hall, London, 1986

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"In the main, big business is essentially a political activity, whether we are talking about the publishing of newspapers or the British Encyclopedia. Most of the well known names in publishing are now part of a multinational group, which also own groceries and TV stations. Although the ownership of publishing houses are clear for all to see, how does one come to the conclusion that publishing is a political activity?"

Over the past years, 50% of the books published in the UK are exported. This means, for our part of the world, for example Africa and the West Indies, people still depend upon the dominant culture of European social values to shape and inform their understanding of the world around them. Since the majority of authors are male, middle-class and come from safe up-market backgrounds, the values propagated by them are those of the dominant class in the society."

Dr Waveney Bushell, the first black Education Psychologist speaking at the conference

Speaker: Dr Waveney Bushell

Archive: Eric and Jessica Huntley, LMA003/3

Event: 'Young Black Pupils Taking for Young Black Pupils', a two-day conference held at Acton College on 30 June and 1 July 1989.

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"The discussion of course was slow in starting. I must say this because I feel that they felt at the beginning that they couldn't trust themselves, perhaps they couldn't trust me, as an adult it was the first time one must remember that they were given the opportunity to talk about their true feelings about their experiences at school to an adult and they were pretty slow, but once they got going we found at the end that we didn't have enough time to talk.

They talked in general terms at the beginning about things that I've heard mentioned here by the other facilitators. They talked about uniforms, which Mollie mentioned when I came in that... How difficult it could be for their parents to have to get all the bits of uniform for the youngsters. This was a group by the way that had already taken exams, would be in the fifth year next year, and the feeling I got was that they couldn't wait to leave school. One girl actually said 'I hate school' and when I talked about expectations, what they expected from school, really trying to focus on work at school, they always focused on attitudes of teachers. They didn't expect to get treated so badly. They didn't expect to be always called up, to be always called upon to provide some answer when anything went wrong in school, so I got the impression that there was this negative feeling which prevailed, which pursued these children in school, which of course they resented.

Eventually, without trying to give them a mental set, I didn't mention racism, but eventually, in talking about the subjects about school work, they mentioned history. And again, as I heard Mollie and others say, that they felt that black history should be taught. Now, I didn't ask them what subjects they felt that should be better for them, they talked about history, about the fact that they have to learn history of English people that they are not particularly interested in, they want to know their own history.

More than one youngster mentioned that more than one teacher in their school tend to mimic the West Indian dialect when speaking to them, and they do this in the classroom and in this way encourage the laughter of the other white children. This was said with great feeling and it was supported by the others in the group. And this of course was no one-off experience. It seems as if this has been done on many occasions and by more than one teacher."

Nesta Speed, one of the adults present at the conference

Speaker: Nesta Speed

Archive: Eric and Jessica Huntley LMA003/3

Event: 'Young Black Pupils Taking for Young Black Pupils', a two-day conference held at Acton College on 30 June and 1 July 1989.

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"My name is Nesta Speed and I would like to make a contribution through personal experience which I had myself. I work at Acton College as a cleaner, and Paula Barlow, who is now Director of Education, she had a meeting with all the cleaners and give us an opportunity to educate ourselves.

So at the meeting I ask her, when she said we could do anything we want, I asked her if she was alright in her head, because I'm that type of person, I said 'are you sure you know what you're talking about?' She said to me 'yes, what would you like to do?'. I said I would like to go into the computing business. Well straight away from a cleaner to the computing it is a big jump.

So when I went to my interview for the role, for the part in the computing I was told that I'm not capable of doing the course by the receptionist, and the receptionist is bombarded, I'm not a prejudiced person, but with a lot of white face. So if they tell you you're not capable then who can you see?

So I said 'Alright, thank you very much for telling me that but my inner determination is to get there, and no matter how I get there, I will get there. So thank you.'

So I went through other barriers, and then I was told 'Thank you Mrs. Speed, for your recent interview, now you've got a place on the course.' Why? It's because I fight for it."

Poet and publisher John La Rose talking about publishing in the Caribbean

Speaker: John La Rose, 1927-2006.

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, LMA004/26

Event: 'The tale, the short story, the novella and the novel: what is emerging?', held at the fifth International Book Fair, Tottenham Town Hall, London, 1986

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"In the Caribbean, where we don't have publishing houses, there is any amount of self publishing of poetry, of novels, of short stories and so on. And the production of literature has looked at the various experiences in an entirely new way.

Now take a novel for example like Garcia Marquez 'One Hundred Years of Solitude'. 'One Hundred Years of Solitude', and I don't know how many people here have read it, is one of the most revolutionary novels you can see, it doesn't speak about a new [indistinguishable] taking power in Columbia, it doesn't speak about that, it is not about that, but yet why do we call it a revolutionary novel? Why do I call it, because I published it myself, why do I call it a revolutionary novel?

It's revolutionary in the presentation of our experience, against a new understanding of the dimensions of that experience. Because it affects our imagination and allows us to conceive ourselves in a different way, to present ourselves in a different way, and to create for ourselves a new kind of vision for our life. That's what makes it revolutionary."

Poet and publisher John La Rose talking about expressing your being

Speaker: John La Rose, 1927-2006.

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, LMA004/26

Event: 'The tale, the short story, the novella and the novel: what is emerging?', held at the fifth International Book Fair, Tottenham Town Hall, London, 1986

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Transcript

"The language is an expression of being. We have a language at the present moment in the Caribbean, we have no other language. People in Africa may have two languages. We have both the Creole tradition, what we call pure linguistics, some of you call National Language, Jamaican Creole National Language. And we have the officialist language in which I'm speaking to you right now in this present moment, Caribbean Standard English. The question is really, if you have English, as we have had English, and have had to appropriate our existence through English, we like everybody else who has a language, purifies it for our own use."

I constantly find myself responding to the word 'black' in my own imagination, because of the pejorative sense in which that word is used, and having to purify it for myself, and obviously when I write and when I speak I shall be doing it, because I shall not be using it in the same way. But if people have had that existence of black in their language, who have not yet realised the need to change it, have as I have who am black."

Lucinda Roy: 'If You Know Black Hair'

Speaker: Lucinda Roy, poet, born 1955

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, LMA004/2

Event: 'Wailing The Dead To Sleep' poetry reading, London, 1988

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"If you know, you really know black hair, the way it feels like bunched-up cloud or dense-packed candy floss, If you know, you really know the smell of milky coconut easing through the careful braids or the relaxed curls of women just as bold with chemicals as all the white girls with their tightly perms, if you know all this, then you know that there is nothing softer sweeter tougher than black hair. Look at how the rain perches like snow on foamy curls. Look at how the hair springs back to its original position. Look at how it struggles against the comb reasserting itself like an old mother who's seen more than she ever wanted to.

So when my mother smiles at my son's effervescent hair, and when I smile too seeing bubbles brownly crown his head we are rejoicing in the thing my father gave my son, a kind of indomitability. May it cling to his head like memory. May hands that touch it feel the soft of strength."

Lemn Sissay: 'African Metaphor'

Speaker: Lemn Sissay, poet, born 1967

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications LMA004/3

Event: 'Wailing The Dead To Sleep' book launch, National Poetry Centre, Earls Court Square, London, 1988

[Listen here](#)

Transcript

"There's a lot of analysing of racism going on lately. A lot of 'Right Ok let's sit down and talk about it OK? OK!' And it's about the way that I've said this so many times but it's still the same, it's about the way that racisms like this yeah, somebody comes up to you with a fist right, got the fist here and they've got a hammer or whatever in their fist and they go BAM! And you're on the floor right and they say 'OK, how did it happen?' Do you know what I'm saying? Sorry I said that badly. What I mean is that you're supposed to analyse what is hitting you in the face straight... Do you understand what I mean? Somebody said to me the armed struggle is the highest form of change... This is the truth in that. It's called African Metaphor.

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

You can't sanction the hearts of an African race.
You can't hide a man from his very own face.
You can never be a king if you elect yourself the crown.
You can never feel the suffering if you're never in town.

You're on the great white animal colonial ego trip,
And your cities will be turned into your own township.
Your tables of justice will be turned until they fall upon your knees.
Our cries of injustice will drown your pathetic pleas.

You can't remember the Sharpeville massacre.
Do you remember the exploitation of Namibia?
You can't remember Mangaliso Sobukwe.
Do you remember the name Azania?

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

You can't hear the trickle of blood that will stick your lips together.
You can close the curtains but you can't hide the weather.
You cannot smell the smoke while it is twisting in the air.
You can't feel the fire though it is singeing your hair.

You can't sweep dust under the rug any more.
You can't keep hiding bodies under the boards of the floor.

Your graves... your graves are already being dug by the gardeners of my country.
Your coffins are cut to measure by my sisters of carpentry.
If you cannot find the illness then you'll never find the cure,
And you'll never be prepared for the African meta...

When mama delved the kitchen knife... into the heart of the white beast
She closed her eyes in the ecstasy of release.
You will see the change, like the bad trip.
You will see eye contact spillage of our township.
You will hear the warrior cry, band fiercely on your door.
You will see the horrifying death-defying anger of the African metaphor.

You can't...

Thanks."

John Agard: 'Everytime I Talk Me Talk'

Speaker: John Agard, playwright, born 1949

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications LMA00/8 S2

Event: John Agard reads a poem about pidgin English, 1983

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"Everytime I talk me talk, you say me talk in Pidgin English
Everytime I talk me language, you say me talk in gibberish
Everytime I talk me talk, you say me talk in broken English
All these years I talk in broken English
By now I should have been a broken man.

But if you think I finish, I far from finish
Everytime I talk me talk, you say me talk in Pidgin English
I surprised you don't call it Pidgin Irish, or better yet Pidgin Scottish
Robert Burns! Robert Burns! You canny wee lad, be my witness
These people say me talkin' bad.

But when it come to language I fightin' fire with fire
And who would call me a liar
If I said the British Empire was funded on Pidgin English
Just a little reminder, when the Coloniser first came to trade
Pidgin English was the name of the game they played.

Eenie meenie miney mo, bend down, kiss me toe
Here take trinket, nice trinket, nice
No, not take yet, first, bring gold, bring spice, bring dye, Indigo dye
Die! I N D I G O, Eenie meenie miney mo
Bring mo, bring mo, bring mo.

Pidgin English the message
Pidgin English the massage
Pidgin English the medium
And never trust a drum, a language you can't fathom
And never trust a drum, a language you can't fathom
Never trust a drum, a language you can't fathom.

And now, four centuries later
You stand up in Trafalgar Square
Waving your umbrella in the air
Telling me, when I talk me talk, I talk in Pidgin English
Imagine you, under Lord Nelson's statue
Pigeon shit to the left of you
Pigeon shit to the right of you.

And you telling me I talk in Pidgin English
Well this is my advice to you
You betta start catching up on Pidgin English
Because Pidgin English coming home to roost
Pidgin English coming home to roost
Pidgin English coming home to roost."

Valerie Bloom: 'Yuh Hear Bout'

Speaker: Valerie Bloom, poet, born 1956

Archive: Bogle L'Ouverture Publications, LMA004/3

Event: 'Wailing The Dead To Sleep' book launch, National Poetry Centre, Earls Court Square, London, 1988

[Listen Here](#)

Transcript

"Lemn did some lovely poems about racism, and it's the fact that if you're black and you live in this country you really can't get away from the issues. This is one I wrote soon after I came here. It's very short, it's called 'Yuh Hear Bout' and it's for Lemn, special request.

Yuh hear bout di people dem arres
Fi bun dung di Asian people dem house?
Yuh hear bour di policeman dem lock up
Fi beat up di black bwoy widout a cause?
Yuh hear bout di MP dem sack because im refuse fi help
Im coloured constituents in dem fight 'gainst deportation?
Yuh noh hear bout dem?
Me neida."