

# **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE LEEDS WEST INDIAN CARNIVAL, 1967 — 2000**

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## **Introduction**

This document aims to record some of the key moments in the life of the West Indian Carnival in Leeds, which started over the August Bank Holiday in 1967, and has taken place at that time every year since. Leeds Carnival is the first one in Europe to be organised entirely by British Caribbeans, and conducted specifically on the lines laid down by carnivals in the Caribbean. Caribbean Carnival events were organised by Claudia Jones in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but these were held on indoor stages. Caribbean Carnivals bands formed one element of the Fetes in Notting Hill organised from 1964 onwards, but the Notting Hill Carnival did not become a specifically Caribbean event until the 1970s<sup>1</sup>. This document celebrates this remarkable achievement, by naming many of the individuals who initiated the Carnival, those who have served on its committee over the years, some of the contestants at the Carnival Queen Shows, and some of the costume and troupe designers. It charts the venues in which the Carnival has been performed, and it records some comments from Carnival participants in an effort to express some of the cultural meaning of the Carnival. The author is extremely grateful for help in producing this document from two key members of the Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee, Arthur France and Susan Pitter, and Brett Harrison from the West Yorkshire Archive Service has also supplied some extra information. But there may well be some errors, and further information will be welcomed<sup>2</sup>. To set the Leeds Carnival in its proper context, the document starts by briefly explaining the origins of the Caribbean Carnival tradition<sup>3</sup>.

## **What is the Carnival? Some Caribbean history**

Carnival in Leeds today displays several of the traditional features established in Trinidad. The 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 the singing, changing its name from Carieto to Cariso, and introduced 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 riotous drinking and disorder. 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, in their watered-down form, as Calypso.) African culture was introduced with musical instruments such as the banja and the maracas. The term 'jamette Carnival' was introduced after the Canboulay riots of 1881 (cannes boulés being French for the burning of the sugar cane): 'jamette' is derived from 'diametre', a reference to the people below the diameter of respectability. The insurrectionary, bacchanalian aspect of Carnival has meant, until relatively recently, that 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. Steel Pans were introduced in 1937, and subsequently replaced the earlier iron and bamboo drumming equipment. Electric musical instruments seem to have been introduced from the 1960s.<sup>4</sup>

In Leeds today, the Carnival exemplifies many of these roots. Costume making is displayed to its highest standard at the Carnival Queen Show on the Friday of the August Bank Holiday weekend. Here women of all ages will appear before judges wearing and carrying costumes representing birds, coral reefs, Caribbean islands, butterflies and such like. 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 adults. 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.<sup>5</sup> At the Carnival Monarch show on the Sunday night, men will compete for the honour of writing and performing the best satirical Calypso. J'Ouvert (or Juvee, 'the opening'), in the early morning of Bank Holiday Monday, the procession of people in their party clothes, or in their dressing gowns, is reminiscent of the Canboulay parades (which, from the 1890s, were only allowed to start after 6am). From about 2pm on the Monday, the arena of Potternewton Park in Chapeltown fills the Queen Contestants, troupes (or bands) of anything from 10 to 40 people in specially designed costumes on a particular theme, and others in individual costumes. All these will join the Steel Bands and Sound Systems on lorries which are waiting on the adjacent road, Harehills Avenue. The Sound Systems will play records and CDs of the Soca music which now dominates the Trinidad Carnival and the crowds which follow the lorry and its troupe will be exhorted to 'jam' or dance—reminding us of the 'jamettes' of the past. The parade (see map for the current route) replicates the major street procession of the Trinidad Carnival. Some members of the procession are likely to be consuming alcohol, and some of them will have started drinking on the previous Friday. 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, will entertain the crowd with the fastest, sexiest music yet invented, and those bacchanalians who can still stand will jam the night a way.

### **Leeds, 1967: the first West Indian Carnival in Europe**

The origin of the Leeds' Carnival lies in a fete organised in 1966 at Kitson College (now Leeds College of Technology) by two students, Frankie Davis (from Trinidad) and Tony Lewis (from Jamaica)<sup>6</sup>. 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 wore his costume on the bus from Roundhay Road to the town centre. The party ended at the British Council's International House, off North Street.

Arthur France, who has been a leading light in the Leeds Carnival from the start, had first suggested starting a Carnival in 1966. He approached the United Caribbean Association, the organisation started in 1964 to represent Leeds' Caribbean population, for backing, but it initially rejected the idea, and then set up a committee which did not deliver. Arthur France was one of the most radical members of the United Caribbean Association, but he wanted to establish Carnival in Leeds partly as a way of cooling off from politics, to have some fun amidst the often conflictual campaigns against racial discrimination that the UCA was compelled to launch. To push his idea forward, Arthur France then selected another committee, which included Willie Robinson, Wally Thompson, Irwin and Rounica, Samlal Singh, Rose McAlister, Ken Thomas, Anson Shepherd, Calvin Beech and Vanta Paul. 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. 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. Between 1999 and 2001 it was transformed into the Leeds Media Centre.) Samlal Singh's costume—The Sun Goddess—worn by Vicky Seal, 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.

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 (lead 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, where a crowd of about 1,000 people were entertained by a steel band competition judged by Junior Telford from London, who had brought the first Trinidadian steel band to Europe. That night, the last Lap dance was held at the Leeds Town Hall. Telford took the news back to

London, and the Leeds troupes were invited to attend the first Notting Hill Carnival which took place that year, shortly after the Leeds Carnival.<sup>7</sup>

### 1970s Carnivals

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a set of black and white images, produced by a commercial photographer, Jimmie Waite of Photopress (Leeds), of several contestants who appeared at the 1970 Carnival Queen Show in the Mecca Ballroom. [ WYAS ref: WYL5000/ 5/14/10394 ]. The Master of Ceremonies for that year was Trevor MacDonald. He was interviewed by Susan Pitter for the Carnival Programme in 1999 when he had just been knighted for his services to broadcasting. That year's Carnival Queen was Jean Jeffers in a costume entitled 'Caribbean Sky at Night'. She was crowned by the previous year's Queen, Janet France. [Photograph in *Leeds in the News* by Brett Harrison, Stroud, 1996, p. 84]. A report appeared in *Yorkshire Life* in October 1970, [p. 48] describing the Carnival as 'The first West Indian Gala to be held in this country' and estimating 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 piece includes some photographs of the Queen, Jean Jeffers, and Peter Springer as 'Sun God', also Gary Fingall with friends holding some of the hundred clown masks that he created. There are some 20 colour snaps of this event deposited by Arthur France amongst the Carnival records at the West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds [ref:WYAS5041/2/1/1-20]. Some of these, together with those photographs referred to later have been included in the West Yorkshire Archive Service's Cosmos exhibition which toured West Yorkshire in the second half of 1999 and appear in the exhibition brochure.

The August **1973** issue of *Chapeltown News* features a photograph of the Carnival Queen contestants stressing that it is 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.

The brochure<sup>8</sup> for the **1973** Carnival provides ample detail of the rapid development of the organisation of the Carnival since its first event. 'Under the patronage of Lord and Lady Harewood', the 'Leeds West Indian Carnival development Committee' invited people to the Mecca Ballroom, Leeds (in the recently opened Merrion Centre) on the evening of Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, with a 'Carnival Parade and Dance later at Lipman Hall, Leeds University' on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August. The programme listed the order of proceedings at the Mecca Ballroom:

8.00 pm	Music by Orchestra
9.15 pm	Wilberforce Steel Band

10.00 pm	Opening Fanfare
10.05 pm	Sketch by Clifton Ali
10.10 pm	Limbo Dancers
10.20 pm	Parade of Queen Contestants
11.00 pm	Calypsonian — Lord Silkie
11.15 pm	Crowning of Carnival Queen 1973
11.30 pm	Wilberforce Steel Band

I seem to remember sitting on the balcony at the Mecca until about 1.30 a.m., so I am not certain that this time schedule was exactly followed, but the spectacle was awesome.

The brochure included photographs of the seven contestants for the title of Queen, providing further evidence of the extensive involvement of West Indians living in Leeds and Huddersfield, as well as their developing connections with local, national and international businesses:

- ❖ 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 Idris Browne, sponsored by the United Caribbean Association (in Leeds), 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.

The Master of Ceremonies for the night was Mr Ken Sylvester. The Executive Committee for the 1973 Carnival were named in the brochure:

Betty Bertie	Chairman <sup>9</sup>
Felina Hughes	Secretary
Ian Charles	Public Relations
Stanley Monish	Liaison
Arthur France	Director of Troupes
George Archibald	Director of Steelbands

## Hughbon Condor Costumes Consultant

The brochure spelled out the route for the 'Procession' (the parade of Queens, troupes, steelbands and revellers) on Bank Holiday Monday: 'Commence at Potternewton Park, then turn up Harehills Avenue, down Chapeltown Road, across into Regent Street [via Barrack Road], past Appleyard's garage, turn right up Eastgate into the Headrow, turn right into New Briggate, into North Street. Rest at the Car Park, bottom of Grafton Street. Continue along North Street, turn left into Meanwood Road, turn right into Barrack Street [demolished in 1981 when the new highway was built], then turn left at traffic lights into Chapeltown Road, right at Harehills Avenue, into Potternewton Park'. The rest was needed, particularly by those who pushed the Steel Bands which, throughout the 1970s and part of the 1980s, were mounted on wheeled wooden platforms.

The invitation by the 'Leeds West Indian Carnival Development Committee' to 'A Caribbean Evening' at the Mecca Ballroom in the Merrion Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> August **1974** includes the name of the United Caribbean Association, but the Carnival Committee was by now an organisation in its own right. The brochure produced was less elaborate than the previous year's, but it indicated that the evening again featured the Wilberforce Steel Band, Chapeltown's own calypsonian, Lord Silkie (Artie Davies), and included this time performances by the Leeds West Indian Dancers with the Rebel Daughters and the Zion Brothers. 'Young dancers from the Saturday class' would also perform — a reference to the Supplementary School recently established by the UCA to improve the educational standards of young people in Chapeltown. There was a Calypso sketch, and the 'grand finale' was the contest for 'Miss Carnival 1974'. A single ticket cost 90p in advance, and £1 at the door. If my memory serves me correctly, Abdul Ali was the master of Ceremonies. The Last Lap Dance on the Monday Bank Holiday was held at the Refectory of Leeds University. *Chapeltown News*, August 1974 edition has photographs of four of the five Queen contestants, Kim from Leeds, costume by Frederic Rawlins, James Brown and Michel Paul, Eyonne from Leeds, costume by Edris Browne, Sheila from Leeds, costume by Vince Wilkinson, Orville Hutchings, Joanne from Leeds, costume by Hughbon Condor and Jennifer from Huddersfield, sponsored by the West Indian Steering Committee. The West Yorkshire Archive Service has a 7"x5" black and white photograph of members of the Carnival Development Committee taken in this year- Vince Wilkinson, Hughbon Condor, Hebrew Rawlins, Arthur France, Kathleen Brown and George Archibold. [WYAS ref: WYL5041/2/3/2]. The Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee has one exhibition mounted display board of black and white photographs<sup>10</sup> (8"x6.5") from this year's Carnival, including:

- Christopher Saddler, David, Carl and Amanda Lewis, James Norford, Austin Shaw and Alec McLeish practising Steel Pan in Potternewton Park<sup>11</sup>.

- Leroy and Hughbon Condor crossing Harehills Avenue with their Queen costume
- Two general photographs of the parade assembling in Potternewton Park,
- Hughbon Condor with Maureen Ruddock and a costume in the Park.
- Edris, Cavel and Shirina Browne with costumes in the Park.

In **1975**, the Queen Show was held at the Chapeltown Community Centre on Reginald Terrace. The Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee has three exhibition display boards of black and white photographs from this year's carnival, including (black and white, 6.5"x4"):

- Five Queen contestants at Chapeltown Community Centre: A Samuel, Jocelyn Bass, Iona Jeffers, Melvina Chapman, I George.
- Jocelyn Bass with Arthur France at Chapeltown Community Centre.
- Uncaptioned Queen (probably Iona Jeffers) with Arthur France at Chapeltown Community Centre.
- Large group of people dancing at Chapeltown Community Centre.
- Uncaptioned Queen (probably Iona Jeffers) in costume in Potternewton Park.
- Melvina Chapman (in Queen costume), Peter Elliott, Sheila Howell on the road.
- Castnel John, Pat Puckering, Ruth Bunday and Reuben McTair in the Park. [should be on earlier panel as dates from 1974]
- Uncaptioned photo of men in procession (one of whom is Arthur France). and on the second board three 10"x8" black and white photos:
- Julie and Sandra Avarton, Yvonne Brown and others in the procession on the road.
- Uncaptioned photograph of troupe in costume on the road.
- Uncaptioned photograph including Melvina Chapman in Queen costume and two masked figures in a troupe.

There are seven 5"x 3.5" colour photos, including:

- Hebrew Rawlins (in Indians costume) Ethel Bailey (Queen costume) and Everton Savage.
- Uncaptioned photograph of a Queen in costume (probably Ethel Bailey).
- Procession on the road including Cynthia Bent and Joy, Vi Francis, George Francis.
- Procession on the road including Carol Smith, Duggie Thorpe, Carl Lewis, Raymond Wilkes.
- Procession on the road including George Archibald (in costume) and Ian Charles
- Cookie, holding a baby, Terence Bath, Sadpal Dhunian and others in the Park.
- Jewel of the Caribbean Sky troupe in Potternewton Park.

On the third board there are three black and white photographs (9.5"x7.5") including:

- Diana Lennon, Edris Browne (in troupe costume) and Melvina Chapman (in Queen costume) on the road. [WYAS ref: WYL/5041/2/3/1]
- Annette Rose, Norma Daley and others on the road
- Uncaptioned photo of a troupe on the road.

And another seven colour photos (5"x3.5") including:

- Woman in costume on the road
- Melvina Chapman (Queen) and her troupe on the road
- Steel Band on the road
- Individual Queen in costume on the road.
- Another Steel Band on the road.
- Melda Adams, Tyrone Clarke, Derek Brown and others in costume in a troupe on the road.
- Group of people assembling in the Park

The Last Lap dance was held at Leeds University's Dental School on one year in the mid-1970s and on another occasion it was held at Leeds Polytechnic's Students Union Hall.

**1976** saw a summer marked by strike action by the National Graphical Association on 50 regional titles which ensured that there was very little coverage of the Carnival. A short notice appeared in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 3 September 1976 'A taste of the Caribbean came to Leeds today [Monday 30 August] 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..' There are some 10" x 8" black and white prints of the Carnival procession in Chapeltown Road and gathering in Potternewton Park on 30 August 1976 in the Community Religions Project Archive in the West Yorkshire Archive Service: Leeds [ ref: WYL5046/1/2/1-29].

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 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, technically, a girl, also finds her way into this photograph. 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.

## 1980s Carnivals

For the **1981** Carnival, the Committee has 8"x10" mounted black and white photos including:

- Helen Richards (a Queen contestant) on the road with Dawn Gentles, Michelle White, Nigel Stapleton and others.
- Teresa Thompson (another Queen) with Michael Mayne, Henora and Jason Pennycook.
- Sheila Wilkes with Queen whose costume she designed; Mrs Doris Blackman in costume, Beverley Hutchinson, on stage at Primrose Hill High School in the costume designed by a Bradford team, Helen Richards and Teresa Thompson (Queen contestants) with Abdul Ali, also on stage.
- the Wilberforce Steel Band (including Alf, Let, Amos, Tuddy [Richards], Skip, Wilton being pulled on the wheeled platform surrounded by the crowd, other members of Wilberforce (Rex, Joe and Amos again) in the Park; Teresa Thompson on the road with Carvelle Browne, Donna Gumbs, Yvonne Thomas, Tracey Attram, Michael Mayne, Michael Brown, Mitchell Fishley and others.

The programme for the **1982 Carnival** shows that Susan Pitter and Reggie Challenger were the comperes for the evening. The events on the night were now more extensive than before, but followed a similar format:

8.00 pm	Mackie's Disco
9.00 pm	Carnival slides and film
9.45 pm	Sustain dancers
10.00 pm	Paul 'Quincy' Eubanks [local comedian]
10.10 pm	Addison Phillips [singer]
10.20 pm	'Ole Mas' [sketches]

10.35 pm	Bazzard Players
10.45 pm	Mr and Mrs Sketch
10.55 pm	Parade of Carnival Queen Costumes
11.35 pm	Calypsonians 'Lord Silkie' and others
11.50 pm	Results of Carnival Queen Competition
Midnight	Mackie's Disco
12.30-1am	Boscoe Steel Band

While this programme does not record business sponsorship, evidence of support by public sector bodies is shown by the Committee expressing its gratitude to Leeds City Council, Leeds Education Department, the Commission for Racial Equality, Yorkshire Arts Association and Leeds Community Relations Council.

The six contestants (photographed in the brochure) were:

- ❖ 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 Carvelle 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.

On the Monday, the following steel bands were listed as taking part in the procession: North Star, from Huddersfield; Boscoe and Paradise, both from Leeds; Regal Star and Star Quality, both from Manchester; and Contrast, from Leicester, indicating that the Leeds Carnival was reaching further into the West Indian communities in the north of England. The parade, however, was to be slightly 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.

Mounted, colour photos for this year held by the Committee, include 8"x10" shots of:

- ❑ Edris Browne in costume as a member of a troupe.
- ❑ Diane Williams, Diane Jarratt and the Rouane sisters, also in troupe costume; Lisa Stevens, Lesley France, Steven Ellison, Andrew and Peter Webster and others in a troupe.

- and a 12"x16" photo of Arthur France, partly dressed in an individual costume, alongside Valerie Daley in the Queen costume he designed. Valerie is accompanied by Sonia and Desmond Claxton and Carol Stapleton as they stand near the onlookers on what appears to be Harehills Avenue. This photograph has appeared on page 107 in Brett Harrison's book *A Century of Leeds* (Sutton Publishing, 1999), and a copy of the photo is held in the West Yorkshire Archive Service [ref: WYL5041/2/3/3].

The brochure for **1983** indicates a similar format. 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. In addition to those thanked last year, support is from Scaffolding Great Britain and the national Westminster Bank is gratefully acknowledged.

The photographed Queen contestants were:

- ❖ Cavel 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.

The Monday parade would include Metro, Paradise and Boscoe Steelbands from Leeds, and Star Quality and Caribbean Serenades from Manchester, while Mavrick Sounds [from Leeds] and Tropical Heatwave Steel Band from Manchester would provide music from the stage in the Park. This year the parade was shortened to avoid going near the town centre. 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, representing 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 the Park etc.). While the 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.

The Committee's exhibition photos (colour, 5"x7", 8"x10" and 12"x16") include:

- ❑ Bee and Rhonda Ward, Mary Rawlins, Sharon Williams and other troupe members near the Caribbean Serenaders Steel Band.
- ❑ Clifford Hughes (toasting on the mike), Kevin Da Costa and Ezz Witter standing beside Mavrick Sound's speaker boxes and decks.
- ❑ Pamela Burt on stage with Arthur France's costume.
- ❑ the contestant from Sheffield on stage in a costume designed by Leroy Wenham and The Hub youth club.
- ❑ Cavel Brown in the winning costume, designed by Hughbon Condor, on Harehills Lane among a crowd including Stanley Monish and Cecil Thomas.
- ❑ Janet Haliday and Florine Merchant in troupe costumes.
- ❑ Yasmin Hack (Queen contestant) and Hebrew Rawlins in one of his trade-mark female impersonator costumes talking with the Lord Mayor in the Park.
- ❑ Members of the Kooler Ruler posse, in costume (Dave McCoy, David Francis, Christopher Brown, Calvin Johnson, Stuart Bailey, Peter (Brickie) Brown, Pat and Icilma Richards and David Bailey.
- ❑ Dave Feikert in costume.
- ❑ Old Mas sketch on the stage at Primrose Hill High School.
- ❑ Ian Charles (in his supervisory role).

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a 7"x5" colour photograph of Ian Charles in 1983, [ref: WYL5041/2/3/4].

The **1984** brochure is typed and photocopied, implying that the Committee was perhaps a little strapped for cash this year. The programme for the Queen Show at Primrose Hill High School includes 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' Lover's Rock number 'That's What Friends are For'<sup>12</sup>. Kooler Ruler again provided the music and the same organisations' support is acknowledged as in the previous year, except for the Commission for Racial Equality and the Community Relations Council.

The five contestants photographed (not always clearly) in the brochure were:

- ❖ 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.

Hinting at the problems being posed for the Carnival Committee by residents who lived near the school and 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 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] would provide the music from the stage in the Park. The Last Lap (to finish at 1 am) was at Primrose High, at a cost of £2 per ticket.

The Carnival Committee's photographic exhibits for this year include:

- ❑ Tessa Sanderson, Olympic Gold Medallist, on stage at Primrose Hill High School with Carol Stapleton, in a costume designed by Arthur France
- ❑ A crowd on Harehills Lane surrounding the New World Steel Orchestra, including Kenny James, Leroy Norford, Tracey and Heather Liburd, Gail Claxton, John Jeffers, Sean James, Paul Hamilton.
- ❑ Lord Silkie and Kinkie on stage at Primrose Hill High School, doing a sketch about immigration controls.
- ❑ Daphne Robinson in a Queen contestant's costume on stage at Primrose Hill. [Note that Daphne was not listed in the programme. Either she was an additional contestant, or she substituted for one of the listed contestants.]
- ❑ Sharon Hall, on stage in Potternewton Park, in a costume designed by Sharon Hall and Ken Wenham.
- ❑ Members of the Caribbean Serenaders Steel Band, in the Tetley's T-shirts (Rex, Willie, Wicklin, Delvin, Boon, Robert, Roy and Patricia Prentice.

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a photograph of one of the Carnival Queen contestants for 1984, Carol Stapleton, on the stage at Primrose Hill High School, with Tessa Sanderson, who that year won the Olympic gold medal for the Javelin. [ref:WYL5041/2/3/5]

My record of the **1985** Carnival is limited to the photographs displayed in the Carnival exhibition for this year. These are, with captions:

- ❑ Debra Jeffers, in a Queen costume designed by Arthur France, in Potternewton Park surrounded by a crowd including her sisters Pauline and Silvia, Rosalind Gumbs and Margaret Buchanan.
- ❑ The trophies handed out to winners on stage in the Park.
- ❑ A food stall in the Park, being run by Mrs Casement, Mary Sadler, Myrna Tyrell and Millicent Francis.

- ❑ An un-named person in an individual costume consisting of a dinner jacket and a gorilla mask and a woman who doesn't appear to be objecting at all to his close embrace.
- ❑ Phoebe Cains, Icilma Richards [this is what the caption says, but it doesn't look like Icilma to me] and three children in costume on the road.
- ❑ Brenda Brown and troupe on stage in the Park.
- ❑ The Invaders troupe on stage in the Park, 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, Diane Charles.

The WYAS holds a 7"x5" colour photograph of a policeman dancing in the road during this year's Carnival with an older West Indian woman in her Carnival costume, much to the enjoyment of the by-standers. [ref: WYL5041/2/3/6]

It seems likely that 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, now MP for Leeds East) had arranged for the car park outside the centre to be tarmaced, making it possible for a giant marquee to be erected adjacent to the Centre itself. This marquee was able to provide staging, a back-stage area and seating for the audience.

For **1986** my records are also confined to the photos in the Carnival Committee's exhibition:

- ❑ Julia Lewis in a Queen costume designed by Violet Hendrickson and St Martin's Church on what appears to be Roundhay Road, flanked by her troupe, which includes Rose Farrar, Michelle Condor and Claudia Hobson.
- ❑ Lisa Condor, on stage in the West Indian Centre marquee, in a Queen costume designed by Hughbon Condor.
- ❑ Three more Queens on stage: Sarah Beckles (designed by Leroy Norford), Sheila Howarth (designed by Mr and Mrs Howarth) and Sonia Mitchum (designed by Alec McLeish).
- ❑ The Technorth troupe on stage in the Park.
- ❑ Three contestants at the Children's Show (designed by Alan Julien).
- ❑ Benji and Ruth Bunday in Pierrot costumes.
- ❑ The North Stars Steel Band from Huddersfield, on Roundhay Road, including Crunch, Doc, Kevin, Skinhead, Warren and Marks.

The **1987** brochure sported a newly-designed logo for the Leeds West Indian Carnival itself, and was back to the printed format of previous years. Leeds Community Relations Council returned to the acknowledgements list, and the weekly newspaper *Caribbean Times* was there for the first time. Although thanks to British West Indian Airways was not formally mentioned, the large

presence of its logo on the front page indicated that major corporate sponsorship had at last been acquired by the Committee. Berisford Sound played at the Queen Show, compered by Susan Pitter, and the Mighty Zipper provided the comedy. There were several other 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. For the first time the Queen Show and the Last Lap dance took place in a marquee attached to the side of the West Indian Centre, in Laycock Place, off Chapeltown Road, providing the Committee with much greater control over the proceedings, and side-stepping the neighbour problems experienced at Primrose Hill. One important consequence was that the New World Steel Orchestra was billed as playing from 1.30 a.m. onwards. At the 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.

Photographs in the Committee's exhibition boards for this year include:

- The Lord Mayor with Amarie Claxton and Hughbon Condor in the Queen costume he designed and which won the contest.
- Venetta Bassue and Julia Lewis in their Queen costume.
- The Queen Show judges for that year: Sheila Wilkes, Dr Loss, Brenda Muskett, Leroy Wenham, Brian Braimah.
- Three Queens on the stage in the marquee: 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, with Raymond (Straggy) Ranger, Jackie Gaskin (not Claxton, as the caption reads), in the costume designed and made by the Palace Youth Centre.
- Joan and Helen Jeffers, Angela, Ken and Leanne Wenham, with Helen and Leanne in decorated pushchairs.
- Zipper, in unseemly dress and ears, being applauded by members of the New World Steel Orchestra (Fiona Wilkes, Tracey Liburd, Melvin Zakers, Tubs, Richard Gittings, Gail Claxton, Leroy Norford) at the Queen Show.
- Members of the Birds of a Feather troupe on the stage in the Park.

The WYAS holds another photo (colour, 7"x5") of this troupe, including Sefton Condor, Rose Farrar and Michelle Condor in the procession on the road.

[ref:WYL5041/2/3/7]

In **1988** the Carnival came of age and it celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> 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 (soon afterwards elected as MP for East Leeds), from Richard Bourne (Deputy Director of the Commonwealth Institute), Alex Pascall (Hon. Chairman of the Carnival Arts Committee in London), James Aboaba (Chairman of Technorth), 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), all reflecting 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 with key personnel such as Arthur France, Ian Charles and Hughbon Condor made up the bulk of the magazine.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* played its part with a full page of coverage on the day after the Bank Holiday (30.8.1988). 'Carnival's happy 21<sup>st</sup>' 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 (according the *YEP*), 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'. Photographs included the obligatory friendly policeman; a large crowd shot featuring the costume made by the Palace Youth Centre which picked out the faces of Winnie and Nelson Mandela in sequins on butterfly wings (reminding us of the radical politics that, historically, had often been a feature of Carnival); the winning Queen Michelle Adams in a costume designed by Hughbon Condor; the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Joan Vollans, with Shenika Joseph, one of the Carnival Princesses; and Venessa Wright and Cheryl Daniel, members of the Red Indians troupe.

The Committee's exhibition photos for this year consist of shots of:

- Hebrew Rawlins, yet again in women's clothing, with Bee Ward in worryingly close proximity.
- Monica Richards in an individual costume.
- Gloria Pemberton and Iona Frederick's Red Indians troupe.
- Arthur France, Dudley Nesbitt, Susan Pitter and Kenrick with steel pans.
- Albert and the Drum and Flute players.
- Captain Wenham in his tatters costume.
- A 12"x16" photograph of Michelle Adams in her costume.

Photos (colour, 7"x5") held by the West Yorkshire Archive Service for this year are:

- ❑ A section of the crowd photographed on Roundhay Road, near the site of the former Gaiety Public House [WYL5041/2/3/8].
- ❑ Costume making [Ken Wenham's photograph including Diddy and Debra Jeffers] [WYL5041/2/3/9].
- ❑ Lord Silkie and crew playing Mas in the marquee [WYL5041/2/3/10].

The **1989** Queen Show brochure showed that Lord Silkie was back on stage at the Queen Show (he and his crew had been put firmly in their place a year or two before when they challenged the Committee's competence as organisers of the Carnival), and the Godfather (Mitch Wallace) was playing the Sounds. Brenda [Monique's] dancers, Jenny [a signer], the limbo dancer [Janet Haliday] formed the rest of the entertainment before and during the actual contest of the Queens The MSC (Manpower Services Commission) is included in the acknowledgements, and the six Queen contestants are listed as follows (though without photographs):

- ❖ 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.

Photographs in the Committee's exhibition for this year include:

- ❑ Lord Silkie and the Cockspur Crew.
- ❑ A youth steel band.
- ❑ Members of the Palace Youth Project (Elaine, Nasreen, Melanie and Marcia) in their 'Drugs Nah Sting inna Chapeltown' (produced by the local Anti Hard Drugs Campaign, based at The Palace Youth Project).
- ❑ Ingrid Collins in the costume designed by Arthur France.
- ❑ Old Mas sketch with Lord Silkey, Kinkie, Keith and The Godfather.
- ❑ A 12"x16" shot of Sheila Howarth/Wilkes with Kam Sangra, and members of his family, in the costume he designed and made.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (29.8.1989) produced a photo of an excited looking Councillor Les Carter, Lord Mayor, and his wife, dancing in the park with Carnival revellers, and a policeman in a Carnival head-dress on the road. It listed the awards 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.

The *Yorkshire Post* (29.8.1989) led with a huge photo of Sheila Howarth, the winning Queen, on Roundhay Road; Cheryl James in her costume; Mr George Pike in his sun hat; Daniel Powell, asleep in his pushchair; and Fred Lewis with a bottle of rum.

The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a colour 7"x5" photograph of the St Martin's Church Queen's Costume and members of the troupe in Potternewton Park [WYL5041/2/3/11]

## 1990s Carnivals

Although the Leeds West Indian Carnival has deliberately avoided the professionalisation 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 and 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, known as White Tony, from Manchester. White Tony was executed by rival gang members in late February 1991 (*Yorkshire Evening Post* 26.2.1991).

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 *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). Ever since, the Carnival Committee has referred to this as its *anus horribilis*.

The West Yorkshire Archive Service photos for this year (colour, 7”x5”) are of:

- ❑ Sharon Jeffers (in Queen costume) and Leo Smalle (designer) back stage at the Queen Show at the West Indian Centre. [WYL5041/2/3/12]
- ❑ A professional carnival troupe from London on stage in the Park. [WYL5041/2/3/13]
- ❑ Monica Richards in an individual costume in the Park. [WYL5041/2/3/14]
- ❑ The Lord Mayor, Cllr Bill Kilgallon, with his wife Ann and the winning Carnival Queen in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/15]

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. 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. 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 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary show) there were ten contestants, the largest number in the history of the event to date. These were:

- ❖ 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. [This was the winner, in what was the most technically intricate costume, named Caterpillar Butterfly, yet seen in the history of the Leeds Carnival .]
- ❖ 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.

Comperes for the evening were Susan Pitter and Reggie Challenger, and the entertainment included the display of the winners of the Prince and Princess contest on the previous Sunday, Masqueraders Steel Band, Joe Philips, the 'Ole Mas' sketch, Lord Silky, Angie Le Mar (comedienne), La Carumba Limbo Dancers, with the Godfather's Sound System providing the music.

The events on Monday started with an innovation for the Leeds Carnival: a J'Ouvert morning parade. Modelled on the original Trinidad early morning procession, people who had been raving all night at the Sunday evening event at the West Indian Centre, joined by those with less stamina who, nevertheless, got up early specially for this event, formed a procession at about 6am, and then, led by the Godfather's Sound System precariously lashed to the back of a truck, danced its 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 night before. Some managed to combine the two modes by wearing bed-ware, which was hard to distinguish from dance-ware. 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), Berisford 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.

The winner that year was Denise Lazarus in a costume named 'Caterpillar-Butterfly'. The West Yorkshire Archive Service holds a colour, 7"x5" photograph of Denise Lazarus in a costume named Caterpillar Butterfly, designed by Hughbon Condor, in Potternewtown Park at the 1992 Carnival. [WYL5041/2/3/16]

The **1993** Carnival programme listed six contestants at the Queen Show:

- ❖ Odessa Ellis, designed by Alex Herbert from Manchester.
- ❖ Angela Nelson, sponsored by Leeds City Council and designed by Marlene Ambrose. [This was the winning costume.]
- ❖ 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.

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.

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 Berisford 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 small 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.

For the **1994** Carnival, WYAS holds the following colour, 7"x5" photographs:

- ❑ J'Ouvert Morning revellers in pyjamas and dressing gowns on the road. [WYL5041/2/3/17]
- ❑ Kali Wilkes, in the winning costume titled Fruits of the Caribbean, with her grandmother, Mrs Odessa Stoute, in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/18]
- ❑ A Huddersfield Carnival Queen in costume, with her troupe, in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/19]
- ❑ Huddersfield's Caricou and Petit Martinique Grenada Association's Hell on Earth troupe in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/20]
- ❑ 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. [WYL5041/2/3/21]
- ❑ Claire Howarth and two other Carnival babes at the Prince and Princess Show in the marquee at the West Indian Centre. [WYL5041/2/3/22]

Publicity for the **1995** Carnival advertised the presence of 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 *The Real McCoy*), the local RJC Dance Group and the North Stars Steel Band would provide the

entertainment and the Queen show, but the contestants were not listed. For the last Lap Dance on the Monday, Peter Hunningale and Janet Lee Davies were billed 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 *Post* still had not caught on that Soca is the predominant music at Carnival, and Trinidad is its inspiration. Pamela Campbell, 37, from Leicester was the winning Queen who led the procession, in a costume called Descendant from Africa. 50,000 people were estimated to have taken part, and four arrests were reported.

WYAS holds the following 7"x5" colour photographs of the 1995 Carnival:

- ❑ Robbie Gee (London comedian), Pam Campbell (the winning carnival Queen, from Leicester) and Eddie Nestor (London comedian) back stage at the Queen Show. [WYL5041/2/3/23]
- ❑ Traditional Caribbean mobile food stall in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/24]
- ❑ Susan Pitter, Tara Lawrence and Laurah Wyatt-Pitter in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/25]
- ❑ Crowd in the procession on Roundhay Road, including the St Kitts-Nevis troupe Caribbean Clowns, from Luton. [WYL5041/2/3/26]

The programme for the **1996** Carnival listed the following seven contestants:

- ❖ 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.

Entertainment at the Show included North Stars, RJC Dance Theatre, Alexander the Great (Calypsonian) and Felicity Ethnic (Comedienne) – the 'Old Mas' had finally been deemed a little too old-fashioned. The popular DJ and radio presenter Mr Fluid Irie (Richard Smith) joined Susan Pitter as the compere. Taneesha James, aged 11, was the winning Princess, displaying her costume Goddess of the Scales of Justice (designed and made by her mother Cheryl). Romaine Otley (8) showed his winning Prince costume, Bacchanal Bronco, made by members of Chapeltown Community Centre. Sabrina Collins, aged 16 (and photographed on the front page of the

*Yorkshire Evening Post* 26.8.1996) won the Queen contest in a 6' 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.

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 on the stage of 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.

In **1997** the ten contestants listed in the Committee's brochure were:

- ❖ 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.

Entertainment that night included RJC 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, 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 generously 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 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Carnival in Leeds, with messages from Cllr Norma Hutchinson, one of the few black councillors in the city, and Arthur France, whose extraordinary dedication to the development of the Leeds Caribbean community had been recognised in the award, that year, of the MBE. Some of the points Arthur France made were:

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 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, 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'. 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 are included. The back page showed colour photos, from the Committee's collection, of the 1986 Queen (Lisa Condor), 1988's Michelle Adams and 1994's Kale Wilkes.

The **1998** brochure lists the following contestants at the Carnival Queen Show, with the amendments I noted on my copy on the night placed in square brackets:

- ❖ Simone Rawlins [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) [Snow Goddess] designed by Yola Farrell. [This was the winning costume.]
- ❖ Francesca Odonghus [Dalia Francis appeared on the night] [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.
- ❖ Tania Wilkes [the Windrush Generation] designed by Nigel Wilkes and Sheila Howarth [my note substitutes Arthur France as the designer].
- ❖ 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.

Jo-Ann Alexander was placed second and Rachel Wilkes third. The brochure announced another Monarch competition for Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August and

J'Ouvert morning for 6 am on the Monday. A 'Health Warning' was included for the Monday night Last Lap Dance: '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 *Post* 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 man was Guy Farrar, one of the Carnival's official photographers.) The *Post* 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 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.

For the 1998 Carnival a highly professional folded A4 leaflet had been produced (by Raw Design) for public distribution, including several colour photographs, advertising each of the Carnival's events.

The WYAS holds 7"x5" colour photographs from the 1998 carnival of the following subjects:

- Un-named Queen in Potternewton Park. [WYL5041/2/3/27]
- The Harrison Bunday Solicitors' Judge Dread troupe including Quaddy, Athaliah Durrant, Tinita Richards and Ella Farrar Durrant. [WYL5041/2/3/28]
- Dudley Nesbitt, Steel Pan Tutor. [WYL5041/2/3/29]
- The Godfather Sound at the Last Lap dance (Mitch Wallace (The Godfather), Yabba and Shaggy). [WYL5041/2/3/30]

The **1999** Carnival brochure, by the same 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 Chapeltown organised by the URBAN Partnership Group and an exclusive interview with Sir Trevor Macdonald (who revealed that he was the Master of Ceremonies at the 1970 Queen Show, and that he was an admirer of the highly satirical Trinidadian

Calypsonians Sparrow and Lord Kitchener). It seems, however, that no specific listing for the Queen Show was produced, but Susan Pitter (both the regular compere for Carnival events, and the Carnival's Public Relations officer) has provided the following details from her extraordinary memory:

- ❖ Delores Patterson, from Leicester, wore the winning costume which she 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.
- ❖ Marilyn James wore a costume titled Sweet Harmony which she designed herself.
- ❖ Candice Manifold wore Queen Pterodactyl 2000 designed by Matthew George and Carl Ambrose for M&C Associates of Huddersfield
- ❖ Rachel Wilkes was Mother Sun and de Dancing Daughter, designed by Sheila Howarth.
- ❖ Gemma McEwan was Millennium Magic by Professor Black for the Oaklands Centre, Birmingham.
- ❖ Pam Campbell of Leicester was also a contestant.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* (31.8.1999), however, records that Leeds's 'Caribbean Fantasy' won the 'largest troupe' prize, and that Manchester's 'Magicaladabra' was judged the best troupe. The Caribbean band 'Kasanova' headlined at the last lap dance, and Superintendent Frank Farmer, the Chapeltown 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. It was a week-end for all the family with a friendly happy atmosphere which speaks volumes for the community of Chapeltown. It was a pleasure policing the event'.

The WYAS photographs (colour, 7"x5") for 1999 include:  
 A section of the crowd at the Queen Show in the marquee. [WYL5041/2/3/31]  
 North Stars Steel Orchestra at the Queen Show. [WYL5041/2/3/32]  
 The Pan African Cultural Group performing on their float in the procession on Roundhay Road. [WYL5041/2/3/33]

Susan Pitter has supplied her notes for the **2000** Carnival. The largest ever list of contesting Queens was as follows:

- ❖ Sarai Campbell as Carnival Paradise designed by Vinod France, Romain Otley and Sarai Campbell.
- ❖ Chantelle Davies as Queen of the Lily by Cheryl James and Norma Cannonier.
- ❖ Joanne Alexander as The Puppet Entertainer by Leicester Parents' and Children's Centre.

- ❖ Shantel Grant as Queen Nandi by Arthur France.
- ❖ Trisha Bergen as The Tourist by Trisha Bergen (Nottingham).
- ❖ Constance Smith as One Boonoonoonoos Gyal of the 70's by Pam Campbell and Crew (Leicester).
- ❖ (Un-named contestant) as Millennium Bug by Alex Herbert (Manchester).
- ❖ Nelda Douglas as 'Millennium Butterfly' by Nelda Douglas (Manchester).
- ❖ Pauline Wilkes as Snow Queen by Sheila Howarth.
- ❖ Racquel Wilkes as Ice Crystal by Bernie Wilkes.
- ❖ Donna O'Dian as Madam Flutterbye by Mango.
- ❖ 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 (Huddersfield).
- ❖ Deneice Lazarus as The New Dawn by Hughbon Condor for Grenada Association (Huddersfield).
- ❖ Yvette Robinson as Magicadabra by Professor Black (Birmingham).

Sarai Campbell was the winning Queen; Chantelle Davis came second; with third place going to Joanne Alexander. 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. WYAS has a photograph by Guy Farrar of Donna Odian as Madame Flutterbye, costume designed and made by Rhian Millar and Alex Christie. [WYL5041/2/3/34]

## Conclusion

There is only an arbitrary conclusion to this history—it was commissioned and written in the year 2000. The Leeds West Indian Carnival will continue in a format pretty similar to the one outlined here for the foreseeable future. The designers will continue to design, and new ones will emerge; the stream of men and women who get such huge pleasure from putting on their costumes and taking to the stages, the streets and the Park is endless; and the vast crowds will continue to come out, whatever the weather, to stand and wait for the procession, or follow it as it wends its way around Chapeltown. Organised, with only a fraction of the public acclaim to which it is due, by a dedicated voluntary Committee of local people<sup>13</sup>, this extraordinary festival of artistic creativity, good-will and sheer human energy will delight the people of Leeds for many years to come.

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<sup>1</sup> This is explained in more detail in Connor, Geraldine and Farrar, Max (2003) 'Carnival in Leeds and London, UK: Making New Black British Subjectivities' in Riggio, Milla C (ed.) (2003) *Culture in Action* London and New York: Routledge. Other work on Chapeltown, Leeds, by Max Farrar can be obtained from [www.maxfarrar.org.uk](http://www.maxfarrar.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> During the summer of 2002, the Leeds Arts project Pavilion organised a major project to record, in photography, oral history and video, the Leeds West Indian Carnival. This material was placed on the web at [www.newmasmedia.co.uk](http://www.newmasmedia.co.uk)

<sup>3</sup> This document has been checked by long-standing members of the Leeds West Indian Carnival Committee and every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible. The Chairperson of the Committee, Arthur France, can be contacted (at the time of writing) via Leeds West Indian Centre, 10 Laycock Place, Leeds LS73AJ. The author of this document can be contacted on Email at [m.farrar@lmu.ac.uk](mailto:m.farrar@lmu.ac.uk) or by post at the School of Cultural Studies, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds LS1 3HE, or via the web-site referred to in footnote 1 above.

<sup>4</sup> The sources for this extremely brief account of the origins of Carnival are: Mitto Sampson's articles in *Masquerading – the Art of the Notting Hill Carnival* (London: Arts Council, 1991) and Andrew Pease 'Carnival in Nineteenth Century Trinidad', *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 4 March/June 1956. The most useful book on the Trinidad Carnival is Errol Hill *The Trinidad Carnival* (University of Texas Press, 1972; New Beacon Books, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> I had the privilege one year of donning plastic ears and a Union Jack in order to play Prince Charles at his wedding. Lady Diana was wonderfully represented by local solicitor Ruth Bunday. Arthur France looked particularly fetching as Diane Abbott, MP.

<sup>6</sup> It's worth mentioning that, even though Trinidad is the spiritual and physical 'home' of Carnival, Tony Lewis was equally committed to re-creating the Carnival in Leeds, despite his origins in an island which does not give much emphasis to this art form and is sometimes assumed to reject it as 'not Jamaican'. As Arthur France put it to me after reading the draft of this document, 'Tony 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.

<sup>7</sup> The source of this account is an interview I conducted with Ian Charles and Arthur France in August 1988. A longer version is included in the *Leeds West Indian Carnival 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary Magazine* (1988). There is no record of these events in the Leeds' newspapers.

<sup>8</sup> Here, and throughout this text, I use the brochures produced by the Carnival Committee which I have deposited with the West Yorkshire Archive Service [ref:wyas1006]. It should be noted that sometimes the lists of Carnival Queen contestants produced some weeks before the Queen Show event are not completely accurate. Sometimes there are additional contestants; sometimes another person stands in for the person listed. Unfortunately, I rarely have a record of the changes made on these occasions.

<sup>9</sup> Although this is taken from the text of the brochure published by the Carnival, Arthur France informs me that Bettie was a committee member, but not the Chair. He says that Calvin Beech or Tony Lewis was the Chair at this time.

<sup>10</sup> I have the negatives of these prints, and of almost all of the subsequently mentioned photographs in the Carnival Committee's exhibition. In each case, there are many other photographs in my collection for the years in question. Many of these are included on the web-site [www.nemasmedia.co.uk](http://www.nemasmedia.co.uk) This site includes many other photos, mainly by Leroy Wenham.

<sup>11</sup> The captions for all photographs on the Leeds West Indian Carnival exhibition boards were supplied in 1989 by Ian Charles and Arthur France, at the time when the exhibition was being made (by me). In some cases, I am attempting to fill in gaps in the captions by making deductions from other photographs which do have captions.

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<sup>12</sup> Susan Pitter, Carnival Committee member, provided that information, proving how deeply Carnival and all its workings are etched into the memories of key personnel.

<sup>13</sup> The Committee in 2000 was:

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 Ferara

Sheila Howarth

Nigel Wilkes.

Significant committee members in the 1970s included: George Archibald, Calvin Beech, Kathleen Brown (Spice Girl Mel B's auntie!), Edris Brown, Abdul Ali, and Vernon Baptiste; while in more recent years Ruth Bunday, Hughbon Condor and Jaqui Gaskin have made important contributions to the committee. Alan Julien has been (and still is) a long-standing costume consultant, and Clive Walkins and Eddy Bane were among the early costume makers.