

STARLIGHT

Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group
June 2008

A newsletter for families, friends and professionals with a keen interest in issues related to black young people of mixed heritage.

Editorial

Hello, my name is Tracey Ruskin and I have just joined Starlight on placement from Ruskin College. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to be involved with such an interesting and worthwhile community enterprise. I know I will learn a lot from the experience. I think I can say that learning from each other and supporting each other has always been at the crux of Starlight's ethos and I am very lucky to have come in at this time of exciting changes.

Luckily I met with Sue and Glen in time to be present at the official launch of Starlight's multi-cultural library in their new (and actually first) permanent premises in Kingfisher Green. The launch took place on 24th May and we were pleased to welcome Carolyne Mabesa Newall from the Family Placement Team, who talked about fostering and adoption, particularly of black and mixed heritage children. It was a fantastic day, well supported by the local community and others who have been supporters of Starlight from the beginning.

We hope to welcome many new members; everyone is welcome to



Tracey (on the left) talking to a local resident at the Book & Toy Library launch.

bring their children along, to read, play, draw or just to make new friends, (the children and the parents/guardians!). The centre is very informal and welcoming and coffee, tea and cake are provided. The library is wonderful; the books and toys are appealing to all ages and cultural backgrounds. I was interested and happy to see many white children also benefiting from the positive images of people of different cultures. What better way to promote anti racism than to show children of all back-

grounds, in a fun and educational way, that our differences are to be celebrated. I know from talking to Sue that Starlight is very keen to encourage young people and adults to embrace their own culture and those of others, whilst equipping them to deal with any negativity they may face.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and please do contact us with any comments or suggestions for future issues. We would love to hear about your own experiences or just let us know anything that you would be interested in and we will try to include it.

Who am I?



She was a famous concert pianist but do you know who she is? Turn to page 4 to find out more.

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Special points of interest:

- Going for Gold Showcase in Bristol
- Murder suspects ordered to pay damages to Duwayne Brooks
- MBE for Cyrille Regis
- **FREE SUBSCRIPTION**

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Please ensure any contributions/adverts arrive by 31 August 2008

Next issue: September 2008

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NELSON MANDELA



"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal

opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

These are the words of Nelson Mandela who will celebrate his ninetieth birthday this month. Despite growing up within the oppressive regime of the then South African government, he was determined to educate himself. After taking part in a student protest he was expelled from university, but later completed his BA. He campaigned for his people and worked tirelessly from a young age. He was particularly active in the ANC's (African National Congress) Campaign For The Defiance Of Unjust Laws. He

qualified as an attorney, but as a black man in South Africa, even such a respectable job gave him no protection. He was repeatedly arrested, imprisoned and 'banned', meaning he was confined to a very small area for long periods of time.

Nelson Mandela was sent to prison in 1964 and was not released until 1990. During his time in prison he refused to compromise his political stance and beliefs to secure an earlier release.

On April 27th, 1994, Nelson Mandela, along with his people, was able to vote for the first time in his life. On May 10th 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of South Africa; apartheid was at an end. After one term as president he stepped down but has since worked tirelessly, setting up charitable foundations and continuing to campaign for justice. During his inauguration speech he said, "We understand that there is no easy road to freedom. We know it well that none of us acting alone can achieve success. We must therefore act together as a united people."

Nelson Mandela is truly an inspiration to us all, for despite living in such an oppressive regime, he never answered racism with racism, but fought for justice for all people. Happy Birthday to a truly remarkable man.

Murder suspects pay damages to Lawrence's close friend

Whilst no one has ever been charged with the murder of Stephen Lawrence four suspects have been ordered to pay damages to Duwayne Brooks, Stephen's close friend who was with him the night he was murdered.



A judge at Central London county court has made an order that David Norris, Neil Acourt, Jamie Acourt and Gary Dobson, along with 10 others involved in racist attacks, should pay nominal damages of £100 each to Brooks for assault, conspiracy and false imprisonment.

Brooks sued the defendants in their own capacity and as representatives of one or more racist gangs in south-east London, particularly those known locally as the NTOs (NUTTY or NAZI Turnout) in Thamesmead and the Krays in Eltham.

It is the first court ruling against the suspects in the murder case. A private prosecution against three of the suspects in April 1996 collapsed and police have never charged anyone with the murder.

Brooks, 33, was the key witness and surviving victim of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence on April 22 1993. He says the pair were surrounded by a white gang who stabbed Lawrence to death, and that he too was surrounded and briefly "imprisoned" before he managed to escape. He was assaulted by the gang, after one of them shouted: "What, what nigger."

His claim also states that some or all of the 18 men listed as defendants in the case conspired

to "threaten, harass, assault and/or injure people, particularly black people, and to incite racial hatred", and that the attack on him and Lawrence was part of that conspiracy.

The video surveillance by the Metropolitan police in 1994, which identified racist language and opinions expressed by some of the defendants, was part of the evidence submitted. The murder caused Brooks post-traumatic stress disorder.

Brooks welcomed the judgement. "I hope this judgment will be another step towards getting the people involved in Stephen's murder, and the attack on me, prosecuted. This case was never about getting money for me, it was about getting a judgment against these defendants.

"At the moment this is the only judgment against the suspects in Steve's killing. They may have got away with murder for the time being, but I really don't believe they will ever be able to rest or have any peace."

The Guardian, Saturday June 14 2008

Personally Speaking: Rio Ferdinand

The Voice recently interviewed premier league footballer Rio Ferdinand on his trip to Lagos in Nigeria.

Rio's objective was to raise the aspirations of young people there through the power and popularity of football. While there he received the title of 'Chief Fiwagboye'. Fiwagboye means 'Character Maketh Wealth'. Rio confessed to being embarrassed but proud to be given the title.

He talked about the many cultural influences in his life, growing up in multicultural Peckham. Rio reflected on his own personal experience of being mixed race. "Being mixed race I think I've had the best of both worlds, my mum and dad were really strong on making sure I knew everything about



where my dad was from and the family roots and the same goes for my mum's side. I've never spent time with just one side of the family, I've always spent just as much time with each side, so I've always had a good understanding of who I am and where I'm from. I think some problems come when you have people who don't have a good understanding of both sides of their culture-just one. It's important that when you are from a mixed background you know exactly where you're from".

(The Voice, June 23rd 2008)

Knife & Gun Crime

Fifteen years after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, knife and gun crime is still very much in the news, often with children and teenagers as the victims. It appears that almost every month we hear of a young person being stabbed or shot.

Following campaigns to hand in knives and more stringent laws on the carrying of weapons, knife crime has dropped in the last two years by 15.7%. However there is still a knife related incident every fifty two minutes, with teenagers in London most likely to be the victims,

Last year, 26 teenagers were killed in London - nine in shootings - and 13 have died so far this year. There were 566 serious or fatal incidents involving guns across the UK. (The Guardian, Tuesday May 13, 2008).

Statistics show that those young people who carry weapons are more likely to be victims themselves and we need to teach our own children and those we work with that it is not the way to be safe. We also hope that the new emergency laws regarding witness identification make it easier for people to come forward with information and hopefully act as a deterrent to those who think that intimidation will keep them from being brought to justice.

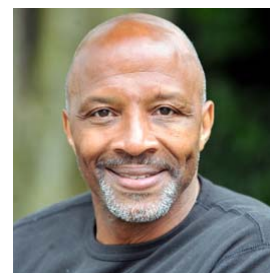
Cyrille Regis awarded MBE

Footballing legend Cyrille Regis has spoken of his pride after he was made an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours.

The former West Bromwich Albion, Coventry City, Aston Villa and Wolverhampton Wanderers striker was honoured for his tireless charity work and a football career which helped lay the foundations for the modern game.

Regis was one of only a handful of black players in the late 1970s, a time when spectators often hurled racist abuse. But Regis' generation of black players helped change the attitude of fans and forced the Football Association to take action against racism.

He recounts managing to remain determined to succeed despite the racism during his early days of playing football "The racism was quite abhorrent but I turned a negative into a positive. I chased harder and played harder, I wanted to score goals and win points." "Back then, you'd have thousands of people screaming "nigger, nigger lick my boots" at you. And the authorities just said "disgraceful" and did nothing. Nothing happened for years, until the late 1980s with the Kick Racism campaigns". When selected to play for England, he received a bullet through the post with the threat, "You'll get one of these through your knees if you step on our Wembley turf." "How could I fight back? Through my talent," says Regis. Regis said: "It is a great feeling being awarded the honour. I have done a lot of charity work, but I suppose the main thing I have been recognised for is sport. Regis added: "It is good now that black players are judged on their talent and nothing else. I think back then we helped to lay the foundations for that."



Cyrille Regis MBE

(adapted from 'kickout' 18th June 2008)

Going for Gold Showcase Evening on 14 May at St Mary Redcliffe & Temple School in Bristol



Sue speaking to the audience

Glen and Sue were invited to attend the 'Going for Gold Showcase' evening in Bristol to participate in a celebration for Year 9 students who have completed the Going for Gold course. It was a very motivational and inspirational evening with the students presenting their research about various prominent black people both in history and in contemporary society.

Two honorary guests were in attendance sharing their own experiences of arriving in Bristol many years ago. Princess Campbell went to Bristol to be a nurse but found many doors locked with signs stating 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish'. She decided to set up a housing association to overcome this problem

and, many years later, it is the biggest housing association in Bristol offering affordable housing to many of the poorer residents. She also went on to manage nursing staff with grit determination having been told that no white nurse would want to be managed by a black woman.

Paul Stephenson had arrived in Bristol to find that the bus company would not employ any black members of staff and he followed the same line of protest as Martin Luther King, in America, boycotting the buses. This finally led to an apology by the bus company after a long campaign and they now employ BME staff. Both speakers were an inspiration and have received acknowledgement for their campaigns with Princess Campbell sharing a photo of her visit to the Queen and Paul sharing a photo of his meeting with the Prime Minister.



Princess Campbell & Paul Stephenson

Two of the young people had selected them for their research and went on to say why they had helped them to realise they must be strong and do well in school. A gospel choir also provided entertainment and the evening was a great success with few dry eyes in the audience.

Mr Lynch, Behaviour Manager and Course Co-ordinator at the school said: "We are very privileged to be participants in such an influential course. We do believe this course addresses many of the needs of our Black and Ethnic Minority pupils."

We look forward to hearing from more schools or community groups who may want to run this course. It is adaptable for use in different settings and can be seen as an additional tool for people already working with young people - with the added benefit of offering them a qualification.

Update from Starlight Black Child Mixed Heritage Group

Having permanent premises is making a huge difference to our group and we are able to widen our services.

- The book and toy library finally has a home and is proving popular with children in the local community.
- Local fathers have asked to have space to meet and a support group known as 'Glad 4 Dads' is currently in its embryonic stage.
- The Enterprising Women's course is currently running on Thursday evenings.
- We also hope to offer a series of workshops and short courses for families from the autumn.

When the group was originally formed in the early 1990s the intention was to emphasise the celebration of our children. We continue to campaign for greater awareness and acceptance that every child deserves to be valued for who they are and not be judged by stereotypical ideas of what they might be.

We are always pleased to hear from anyone interested in getting involved and look forward to hearing from you.

Paul Ince has become the first black English manager in the Premier League

Paul Ince has become the first black English manager in the Premier League after he was appointed Blackburn boss. Garth Crooks, another black former England international, welcomed the news but said the decision was made on merit, not colour.



"This sends out such a fantastic message to other black players who, perhaps for the first time, surely believe they can follow Paul Ince. People will talk about the landmark ... but I really think that is secondary to what he has done to acquire that." Kick It Out's director Piara Powar believes Ince's appointment is "refreshing", stating: "Although Paul Ince has been given the job solely on the basis of what he can bring to Blackburn Rovers, we hope he can be an inspiration to the many other black players leaving the game and a signal to chairmen across the leagues that they too should be looking at black coaching talent."

"Many of our top clubs are now beginning to understand how and why they should be broadening their appeal to new fan bases, why they need to have greater diversity within their staffing structures. (www.kickitout.org)

Move On Up!

The Home Office Social Inclusion Project known as *Positive Futures* continues to express an interest in the accredited courses we offer, particularly the 'Move On Up!' course for 14 - 19 year olds.

One of these projects based in Ipswich commented: "We are finding the course material is excellent and that the young people who we have on the programme are responding to it really well."

A CSV project based in Ipswich have also found the course very helpful in their work with young volunteers. The project co-ordinator told Sue & Glen: "We just wanted to say a big thanks for putting this course together. It's been a great success for our project and some of the young people we work with. One young girl in particular, has really excelled and is now moving onto an apprenticeship at a local council in admin, mostly thanks to this course."

We continue to run this course locally in Oxford and are due to start a course in Barton in late July. Young people who have completed the course have made the following comments:

"It has really helped me - I think the course is brilliant." (Young person, aged 18)

"I feel more certain of what I want and I understand things better now." (Young person, aged 14)

"I really enjoyed the course; I didn't want it to end." (Young person, aged 15)

Oxfordshire Youth Offending Team have also brought into this programme and are beginning to utilise it with their work with young people.

We are always pleased to visit projects and go through what this, and other courses, cover. It has been developed following years of work with young people and we would be happy to hear from anyone who would like further information or who would like us to visit their project.

Please also visit our website: www.starlightenterprise.co.uk for more information about the full range of our OCN accredited courses.



DIY Aromatherapy - five mood boosting blend recipes

Remembering to take care of ourselves and taking time out is often hard when there is so much to do. Sue has recently found herself feeling worn out through a lifestyle of all work and no play. *The Observer* newspaper offered a brilliant two part booklet on massage and relaxation and we thought it might be useful to include some mood boosting tips from Neal's Yard consultant Emma Thomson.

Optimism - If you need a positivity boost use this blend in a burner or put it on a tissue to sniff throughout the day - 6 drops of bergamot essential oil with 2 drops of jasmine and 4 drops of grapefruit essential oils mixed with 30ml (two tablespoons) of a base oil such as almond oil.

Relaxation - Use this blend in a burner or bath when you arrive home in the evening - 4 drops of neroli; 2 drops of vetiver; 4 drops of mandarin and 2 drops of lavender mixed with 30ml of a base oil.

Focus - to refresh and revive you, use in a burner or on a tissue (so no need to dilute) - 4 drops of peppermint; 4 drops of lemon; 2 drops of rosemary and 2 drops of eucalyptus globules essential oils.

Calm - If you feel anxious and breathless, use this blend on your pulse points and in a tissue and breathe deeply - 5 drops of frankincense; 4 drops of rose absolute; 2 drops of roman

chamomile and 1 drop of ylang-ylang blended in 30ml of base oil.

Balance - helps to restore calmness when you are feeling angry or frustrated. Apply this blend to the lower back, use in the bath or put in a burner - 5 drops of geranium; 4 drops of sweet orange; 3 drops of lavender and 2 drops of vetiver essential oils blended in 30ml of base product.

Visit www.nealsyardremedies.com for more information or call 0845 262 3145.

The Guardian & Observer guides to Massage & Relaxation, Part 2 6 July 2008

Who was she?

Known as "the baby genius of the Harlem Renaissance," Philippa Duke Schuyler was a child prodigy who became quite famous for her youthful accomplishments as a composer and pianist. By the time she was four years old, she was a skilled pianist; by five she was performing Mozart before audiences in concert halls. When she was six, she was touring to perform her own compositions; in 1940, at the age of eight, she performed for thousands of visitors at the New York World's Fair. She was ten when she became the youngest member of the National Association of American Composers and Conductors. Schuyler's parents, too, were well-known figures in the Harlem Renaissance. Her father, George Schuyler, was a prominent and controversial African-American journalist. Her mother, Josephine Cogdell, a white woman, was a painter and writer. Both believed strongly that children produced by interracial unions would inherit the strengths of both races and that ultimately mixed-race Americans would resolve the country's racial tensions. Schuyler's parents dedicated themselves to her success: Josephine Cogdell coached her daughter, pushed her to work hard, and acted as her agent; George Schuyler promoted Philippa Duke Schuyler in his newspaper columns and actively sought recognition for her successes in the white press. In an effort to keep her from becoming self-conscious, Schuyler's parents didn't allow her to see any of the considerable media attention she received. Nevertheless, both parents promoted Schuyler as an interracial role model.

America lost interest in her as she aged and as a teenager, she began to suffer the injustices and humiliation of racial prejudice. Unable to find a place for herself in the American music community, Schuyler left the country. Her extensive international performance schedule allowed her to explore the dynamics of race in a variety of cultures and settings. Though she feared she would never feel completely accepted anywhere, she continued to seek a society she could join fully. In *Adventures in Black and White*, a memoir of her experiences travelling worldwide, Schuyler wrote:

'Despite the turmoils, threats, hazards, uncertainties, of this age, I love it, for I realize all human eras have been fraught with problems. I admire the people who are doing their best to shape a new world. I think there is great hope for the human race, and I feel a deep warmth of affection for all peoples, everywhere.'

As a young woman Schuyler changed her name to Felipa Monterro. Though she never gave up performing concerts, as an adult she also worked as a journalist. Fluent in several languages, she wrote for French, Portuguese, and Italian newspapers, as well as American papers and magazines. She authored several moderately successful books based on her experiences covering international news. It was, in fact, while she was covering the war in Vietnam for an American newspaper that she was killed in a helicopter crash. A posthumous book, *Good Men Die*, collected her writings about Vietnam.

FREE SUBSCRIPTION

Please forward this issue to anyone you feel may like to join our list of subscribers. The newsletter is produced quarterly in December, March, June and September. It is distributed via e-mail to save on printing and postage costs and help the environment too.

Send us your views or articles

We welcome contributions from our readers and look forward to receiving your contribution. We hope that this newsletter will provide a forum for promoting positive relations, encouraging an open debate and aiming to improve race relations in Britain today. The deadline for the next issue is August 2008.

Advertise in this Newsletter

Let us know about your events, services and situations vacant. Our rates are very reasonable.

Full page: £150

1/2 page: £85

1/4 page: £45

1/8 page: £25

Please contact us with details.

The deadline for the September newsletter is 31 August 2008.

Who I Am

You live in our misconceptions
Your ideas of stuff I can't do
But get past the ignorance, 'cause I can do
the same as you
I love the skin I'm in
It's all part of me.
I'm a whirlwind of different
cultures
Cultures you have to see!
It doesn't matter what you are
It doesn't change inside
You can befriend anyone you want
Don't ever feel denied.

(Excerpt by Katherine Gilchrist, Year 10 - Flixton Girls' High School in 'Celebrating Black History Month in Trafford, 2007')

Sounds Like Summer!

13th July 2008 12 - 6pm

Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve

'Rhythms Inspired by Nature'

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve

IT'S FREE!

- Enjoy a wide range of multicultural musical performances Take part in drumming & international instrument workshops
- Go on a musical tour of the reserve with the mysterious Green Man
- Embark on nature walks where you can learn more about the wildlife of the reserve
- Make your own natural musical instrument
- Sample the tastes of the Chilterns at local food stalls

Don't forget to bring a picnic

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