

Jamaican Musician Longingly Recalls 'Good Old Days' In Troubled Brixton

By Calvin Lawrence

LONDON--Thirty-two years ago, when Lorenza Chris and his musical talents were first transported from Jamaica to London, blacks hadn't yet achieved their dubious distinction as a "racial problem". Things were different, Chris says.

As part of the initial wave of Jamaican immigrants, he is all too familiar with that black community's 30-year evolution from simple anomaly to scapegoat. He believes both blacks and society at large are to blame for the rise in tension -- racial or otherwise -- that seems to pervade the lives of London minorities, particularly in Brixton. It is from a pub table there that Chris sits, wearing a tilting, black tam, and reflects on the drastic changes in southeast London.

He recalls early encounters with white Brixtonians at jazz performances where his band played, in restaurants, or just on the streets. His musical abilities and interests -- piano, trumpet, trombone and others -- added to his appeal.

"We'd stop in the road and have a chat," he says. "They would want to know what Jamaica is like." Looking back to the old Brixton, he muses: "It was good in those days."

Those days, he admits, are gone; possibly forever. It was not uncommon, he says, for curious Brixton police, too, to enquire about the then negligible -- but noticeable -- immigrant population: what life was like in Jamaica. Today, one is hard pressed to find many police casually conversing with the community's blacks, especially the

young ones.

Chris, a well-spoken man, still plays and gives lessons. He generalizes about his age. "I'm fifty-plenty," he says, with a smile. But his recollection of the early times in Brixton is clear. "We were not street pests," he asserts. That was why there was little antagonism between police and the "longer-stay" of his generation. "We had nothing to hide from the law."

There was plenty of work, rent was 9 shillings a week and a bowl of soup set one back five pence. "It was good," he says, as if longing for a return to the distant past. "The bobbies didn't have time to bother us."

His outdated use of "bobby", said in a voice with no hint of Jamaican influence, sounds a bit out of place. It describes police who once had the reputation of being readily available to help little old ladies cross streets. That generally good-nature carried over to interactions with the black community, Chris says.

But then, as he realizes that nothing last forever, his tone changes. Chris' "bobby" takes on a more immediate identity "Cops of today are not the cops of my time." Police are now tougher, less caring, he says. In the old days, "It wasn't like that."

That gradual shift in police behavior parallels the changing life of many black Brixton residents. But it is impossible to put a finger on which came first. Once thing is certain. Life in Brixton has come a long way since Chris led the first black orchestra through the doors of Brixton Town Hall in 1952. And whites no longer want to touch him just to "see if it is real". These are all old voices.



New York: Black Separatist Cynthia Boston (R) holds press conference following her release from jail. Ms. Boston said her arrest in connection to the bloody Brink's car ambush last month in Nanuet, N.Y., was a witch hunt and a hysterical charade. Looking on is her attorney Kenyatta.

Aldermen Approve Sunnyside Funds

By Beverly McCarthy
Staff Writer

The city Board of Aldermen Monday approved a proposal that would allow the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association to operate its own housing rehabilitation project. The project will be funded with city community development funds which could reach an estimated amount of \$600,000 over the next two years. Officials from the neighborhood association plan to establish a non-profit organization which will be responsible for administering rehabilitation loans over a two-year period.

The proposal was passed by a 5-3 vote, with Virginia Newell, Ernestine Wilson and Robert Northington voting against it. The three aldermen said that they voted against the request by the Sunnyside Neighborhood because it would duplicate services already operated by the city.

"I voted against the proposal because of several reasons," said Northington. "It duplicates services already carried out by the city, I'm not sure about the neighborhood's accountability, the training required to carry out such a project, and this would reduce the amount of total block grant monies from Washington. That leaves less monies for other neighborhoods," explained Northington.

Alderman Newell said that she voted against the proposal because it allows preferential treatment to be given to the Sunnyside Neighborhood.

Larry Little voted in favor of the proposal because he supports the concept of neighborhood rehabilita-

tion.

"I am aware of some of the problems that come up in loan processing," he said. "Perhaps the neighborhood association could do a faster job with processing the loans."

Even though the aldermen did approve the proposal, the project still may not be completed. The neighborhood association must still raise an additional \$75,000 from private resources in order to employ a staff administrator for the project.

Officials from the Sunnyside Neighborhood Association executive board reported that a request for the monies from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation had been denied. John Holleman, manager of the Neighborhood Association, said that plans are currently being made to request funds from other resources.

Also during the meeting, the board approved an ordinance which limits the length of time use, size and illumination of portable signs. The vote was deadlocked with Mayor Corpening breaking the tie.

Under the newly adopted ordinance, a portable sign may be displayed for 30 days per year, with an optional 30 day extension. The ordinance was adopted with much debate. Owners of small businesses gave comments on the difficulties that limiting the use of portable signs would cause.

"I rely on the use of these signs in order for my business to survive," said Linda Willard, who recently opened a barber shop on Bethania Station Road.



Larry Little

Larry Little Speaks At Kiwanis Meeting

By Yvonne Anderson
Staff Writer

Larry Little, alderman of the North Ward, told members of the Greater Winston Kiwanis Club of their importance in shaping the political future of blacks, during an analysis he delivered at Kiwanis' weekly meeting.

Speaking on, "An Overview of the General Election," Little told the service organization that their help was needed by the four black aldermen in charting a road for black people to follow.

"We need your expertise,

your knowledge, your help, if we are going to utilize the position in which we find ourselves to the fullest," said Little.

Little reflected back to the 1974-77 team when four black alderman held seats, Carl Russell, Richard Davis, C.C. Ross, and the late Dr. Albert Coleman.

"We had the opportunity back in '74 and we did not take advantage of it," said Little. "They were divided and consequently, nothing got accomplished. We must not let that happen again," Little said, emotionally.

Little also said that the aldermen must be percep-

tive of intended devious tactics that will be targeted against them in the ensuing term.

Praising the victory of Larry Womble in the Southeast Ward, Little cited the tactical way in which Womble's campaign

was handled.

"They were united in the Southeast Ward from the very beginning. They utilized the voting strength, and I'm very pleased and proud of the way the black candidates stuck together to achieve a common goal,"

said Little. "If we continue to apply that methodology, we will be able to elect blacks as commissioners and to the school board next time; and in '85, perhaps, we will be able to elect a black mayor, but the key is unite."

Survey Sample from page 1

Juan Hatchett - "I think that the selective buying project is a good idea but I don't think Hairston is doing enough. They (NAACP) don't go out to get what they want; they're not aggressive enough."
Annie Cooper - "I really can't comment on the cam-

paign. I don't know too much about it."
Tameka Smith - "I think stores should hire more blacks so that there would be an equal representation of races working in the stores. I think the campaign is a good move by the NAACP."

"Let our fingers do the talking, come see us at Hawkins."

Seated: Angie DeLapp, JoAnn Martin, standing: Roslyn Myers, Debra Goldsmith-receptionist and Anna Leak

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