**What are your memories of the Nottingham Caribbean Carnival?**

*We spent time collecting and archiving the reflections and memories of the Nottingham Carnival from 1958-2002 as well as the thoughts from young people who went to the carnival in recent times. Here are some of their stories....*

**John Baptiste**

Age 50

My first attended carnival was in the 1990s. What I could remember then as I was growing up ,was the environment and the atmosphere of fun, happiness and a family day out. I love the smell of food, especially the aroma of jerk chicken. I love the music- calypso, soca and roots reggae. The aspect that I enjoyed most in the past years of my attendance was the parade and the costumes with the themed elements. I believe that carnival is about the celebrations of the end of slavery and the enslaved Africans mostly from West Africa. What I would like to see in the future is the participation of African masquerades here in Nottingham.

**Jessica Smith**

Age 40

The first thing I look for in the carnival is the design of the costumes and the theme for the Carnival Queen. One year, the theme was feathers and the carnival queen, a highlight for me, wore elaborate feathers and the rest of the costumes were brightly coloured. I love the dancing to the soca beat and seeing the troupes. I like to see the parade enter the Forest and dance on stage. Brilliant dancing, wicked soca tunes – I stand and enjoy everything! I stand and imagine I’m in the Caribbean surrounded by my people. One year Shaka Demus and Pliers came with some wicked tunes – I loved it! Of course other types of music was played: raga, reggae- why not! All Caribbean music is a celebration of our survival from slavery.

**Courtline**

Aged 16

Yes, I have been to carnival. A good day out! Dancing and DJs. A lot of opportunity. A mixture of music. Different floats have different music. Food is great! Jerk chicken. More live performances. Get more artists in. I would like to attend Queen shows in the future.

**Robert Stephens**

From Hyson Green Boys Club

The story I have is about how we organised the first carnival troop lorry procession from St. Ann’s at Sycamore Youth Club, to the Forest and joined the other troupes’ procession. St Ann’s had never been involved with carnival traditionally although people from the area had taken part. We decided to put a troupe of young people together. We can to the boys club to help make costumes. We hired people with the skills and knowledge to train us in making costumes and learning to dance. We dressed our float the same day. It was not pretty but we just wanted to go. We took the float down Hungerhill Rd onto St Ann’s Well Rd, up Shelton St onto Mansfield Rd down to where all the other troupes were waiting. It was the best feeling to be there and parade with the others who had much better floats than we had. But just the feeling our troupe float had made up for the lack of time spent setting it up. We ended up going to Radford town centre and to the Forest. It was one of the longest carnival float parades around the city I have ever seen to date. Best one we have ever done. Young people should do it now.

**Moses Paul**

As I could remember the first time that I attended the Nottingham Caribbean Carnival was in 2000. My earliest memories then were colourful costumes, masks, the music and the parade passing through Gregory Boulevard. To me it gave the entire community a chance to come together to celebrate their ancestry and lineage; most especially the African Caribbean and its Diaspora. Having read history and the origin of the carnival; from slavery to carnival and the enslaved Africans mostly from West Africa, I would like to see more participation of Africans on the carnival for better integration.

**Zoe Anne Keeling**

I like the parade. I used to follow them into town. I like how they dance. I enjoyed the ‘Fish & Dumpling’ and Jerk Pork with the sauce. I loved the reggae tent. When I went with my friends, I used to dance and stay until it was done. I liked the singers on stage. When I was younger, I used to go with my mum and dad and family. Now I take my own children and they really enjoy it.

**Wayne Akinson**

In Jamaica, I used to go to the carnival. There was lots of food, singers, tourists and music. I enjoyed the costumes. In Jamaica it was a lot different to England because of the atmosphere, the beach and everything. The food was different and there was a lot more artistes compared to England.

**Joseph Bennett**

I go to the Nottingham Carnival with my family. When I was little, I enjoyed the music and the food. Now I am in the carnival myself, doing the dancing, which I love. My nana used to sell food there as well.

**Renee Hines**

I went to the carnival and I was dancing in 2013. I went on the rides, which I enjoyed. I like the music and the food. The food I liked the best was the Jerk Chicken. I looked forward to going to the carnival. I like all the music, the rides and the music as well. I was six when I started going. I danced in the carnival every year since.

**Kyra Blake** aged 14 years

I went to the carnival every year since I was five years old and started dancing when I have five. When I was 12 I went and there was fighting so I left. I like the music in the tent, Kemet FM. All the different types. The family had a food store ‘Hot & Spicy’ that served mutton and rice. I liked this the best. My nana used to present the stage artistes that would come. I would meet all the singers, which was exciting. Beanie Man, Miss Dynamite I liked the best.

**Stacey James**

When I was 12, I can remember going with my mother, brother and sisters. I like Dumpling and Jerk Chicken. I used to like the reggae tent. I went in there with my friends. I enjoyed the girls on the stage. I looked forward to the parade. When I got older I went with my friends. We used to walk there. I like dancing and having a laugh and linking up with all my friends. I used to go to town to get some things especially to wear or make my own clothes – cut up my jeans and that. Now I take my own children. I also liked the rides and the after party at night was good.

**Samantha Leach** aged 31

My daughter was in the carnival when she was 6. She was danced and made her own outfit. That was in 2007. With Joy Kenning Street. I remember the different culture, food and different tastes. My best dish was brown chicken, rice and peas. I like the mixture of the music. I used to go on Sunday. I really enjoy watching the dancing and the costumes. It was great!

**Akira Thomas** age 14

I was 5 years old when I first went to the carnival. I like watching performances. I like the food and the music, mutton and rice I like the best. I have been every years since I was 5. Now I go with my friends. I go on Saturday and Sunday.

**Vincent King** aged 75+

Forest in 80 (1980?). Took your kid till evening. Lots of people. The stage show. Chips for the kid. Reggae. Jamaica.

**Desmond Fagon** aged 75+

82 (1982?) Forest. Buy food, rice, curry mutton. Nice meeting place. Nice girls. My cousin liked dancing. I joined in.

**Ruth Bedwood**

My grand kids go and they enjoy it. Colour costumes and music.

**Daphne Brown**

This ‘Win A Car’ raffle. Costumes. Meadows. Chinese lady with wings. Gary Mitchell. Jerk Pork and steel band.

**Doris Johnson** aged 75+

Children. Candy sugar, stewed toffee apple. People buying things. Meeting friends. People dress up on the float. Happy.

**Kaya Clarke** aged 16

8 years old. Troupe was touring – Zodiac, Independent St, Joy. Travelling, rehearsals, troupes, music, friends, family, cousins, food and fry chicken. In 2011 the drumming was good. Soca.

**Dominque Campbell** aged 13+

Fun. Costumes – vibe, smiles, colour, dancing, food, juicy chicken. People enjoying themselves.

**Avis Elisabeth Vaunhan / Parker** aged 75+

Cooking. Rice, peas, ackee & salt fish, somba salt with fried pork. Sound Systems. Dancing.

**John** 70+

The carnival in The Meadows so many times. Music. Steel band.