



Emanuel School

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Monday 3rd - Friday 28th October

Thursday



Carl 'The Cat' Thompson
Mr T Jones, School Archivist

Boxing history is littered with amazing black fighters whose careers were stunted by racism, segregation and politics. But even if the odds were stacked against them, many such boxers inspired generations by rising to the pinnacle of the sport winning world titles, some of the most famous being Joe Louis, Jack Johnson, Henry Armstrong, Sugar Ray Robinson, Archie Moore, and Muhammad Ali. As a life-long fan of the 'Sweet Science' I have read biographies on all these iconic fighters, and it is clear the colour of their skin undoubtedly made their lives significantly more challenging, but it does not define them and in boxing circles they are remembered firstly for their formidable ringcraft rather than their race. That is the way it should always have been.

Even though I love Joe, Jack, Henry, Sugar, Archie, and Muhammad my favourite ever boxer, who also happens to be black, hails from much closer to home, Manchester. In boxing, personal favourites are almost always fighters from your own era, those witnessed in the flesh both in victory and defeat, which for me is power-puncher Carl 'The Cat' Thompson. Carl fought between 1988-2005, winning World Cruiserweight titles and famously defeated both Chris Eubank (twice) and future heavyweight champion David Haye. I was fortunate enough to be at Wembley Arena the night Carl stopped the hotly tipped Haye in the fifth round and it remains the single most exciting live sporting event I ever witnessed, topping many other big nights of boxing. Carl looked down and out after the first round, but he was not called 'The Cat' for nothing and surely burned several of his nine lives in this legendary brawl.

Carl had a huge right hand and tremendous heart and even though he lost a few, he is also remembered for his stunning back-from-the-brink one punch KO of Sebastian Rothman (look it up on YouTube for proof of his power). Thankfully, the racism prominent in British boxing in the seventies and early eighties, brilliantly covered in Errol Christie's "No Place to Hide: How I put the Black in the Union Jack" had disappeared by the time Carl laced up his gloves on and he gave sports fans many nights of excitement.

Boxing has always been a sport with strong working-class roots which allows young men, and now women, to dream of a better life. I have been fascinated by boxing since Mike Tyson rampaged on the scene in the mid-eighties and since that time Britain has had an incredible number of fantastic black boxers from Frank Bruno, Danny Williams (who I also

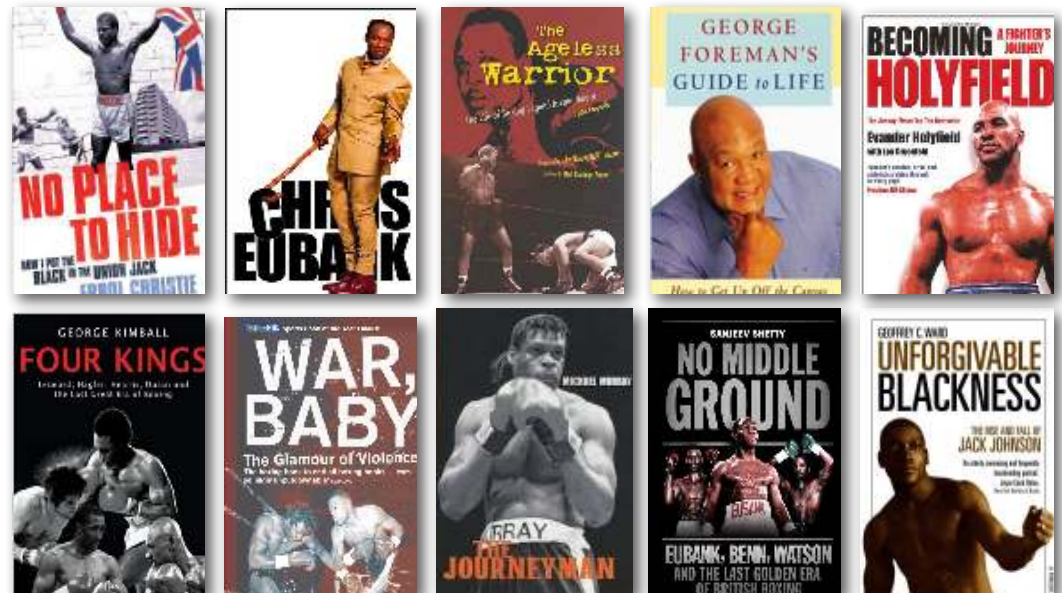
saw many times), Matt Skelton (another favourite I loved to watch), Lennox Lewis, Chris Eubank, and Nigel Benn accompanying my hero, Carl. Sadly, in boxing we hear of too many ex-fighters hitting tough times in retirement, thankfully this did not happen to Carl who now works happily as a personal trainer in a gym but no longer watches the fight game. Thanks for the memories, Carl, you truly were 'Mr Excitement!'

Here are ten of my favourite boxing biographies featuring black boxers (hopefully Carl will author a book one day!)

- Christie, Errol. *No Place to Hide: How I put the Black in the Union Jack.*
- Eubank, Chris. *The Autobiography.*
- Fitzgerald, Mike. *The Ageless Warrior: The Life of Boxing Legend Archie Moore.*
- Foreman, George. *Guide to Life: How to get up off the Canvas when Life Knocks you Down.*
- Holyfield, Evander. *Becoming Holyfield: A Fighter's Journey.*
- Kimball, George. *Four Kings: The intoxicating and captivating tale of four men who changed the face of Boxing.*
- Mitchell, Kevin. *War, Baby: The Glamour of Violence* (about Nigel Benn's fight with Gerald McClellan).
- Murray, Michael. *The Journeyman.*
- Shetty, Sanjeev. *No Middle Ground: Eubank, Benn, Watson, and the golden era of British boxing.*
- Ward, Geoffrey. *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson.*



Carl Thompson



Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jnr, a Jamaican political activist, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur, and orator, was born on 17 August 1887 in St Ann's Bay. Among 11 children of a stone mason and a domestic worker, Marcus Garvey was one of only two siblings along with his eldest sister Indiana who lived to adulthood.

Garvey came to England in 1912, where he worked at the offices of the African Times and Orient Review journal under the leadership of Duse Mohammed Ali, the famous black nationalist and journalist. The African Times and Orient Review was the first political journal produced by and for black people ever published in Britain. It was produced during 1912-1913 and 1917-1918 on a monthly basis and was printed in Fleet Street in London.

Returning to Jamaica from England in July 1914, with the help of an associate Enos J. Sloy and about four others, he created the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League and launched it on 1st August 1914 which is Emancipation Day in the British-ruled Caribbean.

The first UNIA division was formed in New York in May 1917. Within a month, the organisation had 2 million members all over the United States. By 1920, the U.N.I.A. had 1,100 chapters in 40 countries around the world such as the UK, Cuba, Panama, Costa Rica, Ghana. By 1926, the membership of the U.N.I.A. had grown to over 11 million members and Marcus Garvey had built the largest black organization in history.

The convention adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World which was one of the earliest and most complete documents advocating human rights and detailing the abuses against black people worldwide.



Marcus Mosiah

In 1920, Garvey established the Negro Factories Corporation and offered stock for African Americans to buy. He raised one million dollars for the project and wanted to produce everything that a nation needed so that African Americans could completely rely on their own efforts. It generated income and provided jobs through its numerous enterprises, including a chain of grocery stores and restaurants, steam laundry, tailor shop, dress-making shop, millinery store (clothing, fashion, hats, accessories, etc.), publishing house and doll factory.

Garvey's ultimate dream was for the independence of all African countries and the creation of a United States of Africa. The UNIA embarked on a plan to repatriate some blacks from the United States and other parts of the African Diaspora back to Africa. Liberia, a country established in 1822 by the American Colonisation Society was the intended geographical base of the UNIA's African colonisation venture.

In 1928, Garvey created the People's Political Party (PPP) which was Jamaica's first modern political party and the first to defend the interests of the black majority. The party's manifesto called for official representation in the British Parliament, a minimum wage, land reform, a Jamaican university, judicial reform, a government-run electrical system, public high schools and libraries and a National Opera House.

Garvey died on 10 June 1940 in London at age 53 without having set foot in Africa. Nevertheless, he has inspired countless major black movements of the 20th century, both in Africa and the Americas. Followers of Garvey's ideology include Hon Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr, as well as leaders of African Independent states such as Presidents Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Nelson Mandela, Patrice Lumumba, and Julius Nyerere.

The Windrush Scandal

Rebecca Lemma - Upper Sixth

Brixton is widely considered as a melting pot of Afro-Caribbean culture, and, for the majority of my life, has been the place I have been proud to call home. In fact, I fail to remember a time where the market or Electric Avenue wasn't filled with the familiar trill of Reggae music, or the hum of the conversations of people crowding around independent, Caribbean businesses.

Largely, this is down to the 'Windrush' generation; in 1948, 1027 passengers who arrived in the UK as immigrants from across the Caribbean, settled in Brixton, Stockwell and surrounding areas. They were automatically given citizenship status, mostly taking up jobs in the NHS, and becoming a significant help in the post-war labour shortage.

However, in 2012, new government policy was introduced, instructing employers to enforce immigration controls. As most of the Windrush generation had arrived as children on their parents' passports, many lacked the documentation to prove their right to remain in the UK. The Home Office then placed the responsibility on the individuals to prove their residency by demanding at least one official document for every year they had lived here, having destroyed thousands of landing cards and making the task close to impossible.

Falsely deemed as 'illegal immigrants', the Windrush generation began to lose access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licenses. Many were thrown into immigration detention, separated from their families, prevented from travelling abroad and threatened with forcible removal, while others were deported to countries they hadn't seen since they were children.

Eventually reports were released by Guardian journalist Amelia Gentleman, in 2017, which claimed hundreds of Commonwealth citizens had been wrongly arrested, detained, and in some cases deported. These shocking stories hit the headlines, and provoked widespread condemnation of the government's failings, so much so that the then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid announced there would be a review of the scandal, commissioned by the Home Office itself.

This was more than a government slip-up or mistake: it was a completely intentional result of policies created to make life impossible for non-white immigrants without the right papers to hand, and ultimately push them out of the country.

At the heart of Brixton, the central gardens housing the famous Ritz cinema, Tate library and Black Cultural Archive was renamed the 'Windrush Square', commemorating the 50th anniversary of the docking of the HMT Empire Windrush. And whilst the naming of a square is worth nothing in reparations to the traumatic experiences of innocent British citizens, I cannot say that when I walk through it, I am not filled with pride for an area so unashamedly filled with culture and the resilience of those willing to stand up for it.

