

## Caribbean London [http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/caribbean\\_london\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2005/05/27/caribbean_london_feature.shtml)

*Find out more about London's thriving Caribbean community and its history. London would be a quite different place if people had not come from the Caribbean to settle in the capital.*

Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and St Lucia are just a few of the Caribbean islands represented in London. The strength of Caribbean culture can be felt across the capital - from arts to food and language.

London would be quite different if Caribbean people had not come here. The relationship between the Caribbean and Britain has been long and sometimes troubled. The slave trade, and later the colonisation of the Caribbean by the British Empire has contributed greatly to the prosperity of Britain today.

The distance between Britain and the Caribbean soon closed when Caribbean people answered the calls from British industries to help rebuild a post-war nation. It is through immigration, that the real marriage between the two communities began. When people started to arrive in larger numbers from the Caribbean in the late 1940s, they left the ships with a passion and excitement for the place they considered to be the "Motherland"....

For several years, living as a Caribbean person in London could be difficult. Police protection was not adequate and some black people experienced harassment from the police themselves. Caribbean children had to deal with verbal and physical abuse in the education system, which led to some not achieving their true potential.

Such harsh treatment at the hands of the capital's indigenous population, may have been the spur that urged London's Caribbeans to be among the forerunners of immigrant populations to develop self-help organisations.

The failure to achieve recognition in the mainstream press led to the launch of The Voice newspaper - one of the first aimed primarily at a black audience in Britain. And frustration at the lack of information about their history and origins, led some Caribbeans to press for Black History Month, which has now become part of the established education calendar for many schools and institutions, every October.

Many of today's Caribbean Londoners have become business people, running their own restaurants, barbers, nightclubs, bookshops and grocers. Others have achieved high positions in big business and public life. London is home to thousands of businesses owned by people from many of the Caribbean islands. The strength of the black pound is so great that it can no longer be ignored and Caribbean Londoners find themselves singled out for attention by advertisers.

Over half a century since people from the Caribbean started to arrive in London in large numbers, their influence is widespread throughout London's social and cultural life. A host of actors, musicians, presenters, sportspeople and politicians who are second and third generation Caribbeans, are dynamic role-models for future generations.

Caribbean people have become one of the threads holding London together. One of the best illustrations of that is the Notting Hill Carnival. Its roots are firmly in the Caribbean tradition, but Carnival is now seen as a key offering for London's Cultural Olympiad in 2012, when the festival will coincide with the games in the capital.