

## **Carnegie Cricket Club**

At the conclusion of the Second World War there was a shortage of labour in the British Isles whilst in the Caribbean Islands there was large scale unemployment. However, the unemployed in those islands preferred to immigrate to the United States for employment. In 1952 the McCarren-Walter Immigration Act temporarily halted Caribbean immigration to the United States

With the United States closing its doors for the employment of Caribbean workers Britain with its shortage of labour became a popular choice for employment purposes.

The 1950s and 1960s saw periods of strong economic expansion with employment opportunity in textile, metal manufacture, health care and transport. The jobs were generally low paid and long hours with shift work which did not attract British workers.

The National Health Service and London Transport recruited workers in large numbers directly from the Caribbean islands while other industries gladly provide employment for those immigrants on arrival on the shores of Britain. Among those immigrants were a number of talented young cricketers who had learned and loved the game of cricket from birth. The game of cricket was the 'religion' in the British Caribbean islands. Inevitably the young men would want to continue to be involved in their 'religion'.

During the 1950s the British politicians and policymakers were 'hesitant and ambiguous and little positive was done to assist in their (British Caribbean immigrants) settlement, integration and acceptance'. The politicians and policymakers were aware at the beginning of British Caribbean immigration that the new workers would face hostile racial prejudice from the majority of the host population.

These talented young cricketers had to contend with hideous racial prejudice at work and on the cricket field to name a few places. The local cricket clubs generally did not welcome them as members. Consequently they were forced to establish their own cricket clubs hence the arrival of Carnegie Cricket Club in 1955 at Ruskin Park, near the primary settlement of Caribbean islands nationals in Brixton. The cricket club took its name from the nearby **Carnegie Library** in Herne Hill Road.

Since 1955 Carnegie Cricket Club has played continuously as a 'wandering team' during the summer months until 2013 when they found a '*home*' at Sinjuns Grammarian Cricket Club ground situated between Trinity Road and Beechcroft Road in Tooting, south-west London.

This year, 2015, Carnegie would be celebrating 60 years as a cricket club. During those years the cricket club has had some wonderfully talented cricketers. The club has produced, from its humble beginning, four professional cricketers during the aforementioned years to include the late Dennis Marriott (Surrey County Cricket Club and Middlesex County Cricket Club), Lonsdale Skinner (Surrey County Cricket Club and Guyana), Leroy Parris (MCC Young Professionals) and Dillon Levius (MCC Young Professional). Club members Joe Fortune turned out for Essex County Cricket Club Second Eleven, while Wendell McCall played for Middlesex County Cricket

Club Second Eleven. Other outstanding cricketers that must be mentioned are Cedric Gobin (Guyana), Cardo Brown (Jamaica), Winston 'Buss' Reid (Jamaica), Bertie Brown (Barbados), Calstone Bascombe (Barbados), Ashton Sherwood (Jamaica) and Henderson Phillips (Barbados). Cedric Gobin represented the Club Cricket Conference on a number of occasions.

Most of these cricketers had played high standard club cricket in their native countries with West Indies Test players and their island's first class cricketers. The club cricket these players were associated with before venturing to England was of a much higher standard than English club cricket. At that time on those Caribbean islands all first class cricketers, including West Indies Test players, played regular high standard club cricket. So to be included in those cricket teams all players had to be of the highest standard.

The history of Carnegie Cricket Club cannot be completed without including the club's first and iconic administrator Robert 'Bob' Milne, a British national, who served unstintingly from 1955 to 1983. He was the '*rock*' of the cricket club and can be safely said that during his reign (yes, he was reigning) he was 'King Bob' of Carnegie CC. With 'King Bob' at the helm of the cricket club and his administrative skills Carnegie Cricket Club moved from playing in local parks to competing on County Cricket Club grounds against the best cricket club teams in south east England. The club played on the following County Cricket Club grounds: Mote Park, Maidstone (Kent), Cheriton Road Folkestone (Kent), Midland Bank Sport Ground, Beckenham (Kent), the Saffrons, Eastbourne (Sussex), Arundel Castle Cricket Ground (Sussex), the Cricket Field Road Ground, Horsham (Sussex), Kenton Court Meadows, Sunbury-on-Thames (Surrey), Decca Sports Ground, Tolworth (Surrey), Imber Court, East Molesley (Surrey), British Aerospace Company Ground, Byfleet, (Surrey), County Ground Leyton (Essex), Southchurch Park, Southend-on-Sea (Essex), Chalkwell Park, Westcliff-on-Sea (Essex), to name a few venues.

This year Carnegie Cricket Club is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and its evolution from a Caribbean islands immigrant cricket club to reputable sporting organisation that is worthy of recognition by the cricket authorities in England. The club's growth has seen it moved from playing on the open common fields in south east and south west London to numerous County Club grounds in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Essex.

Despite its early handicap of playing in sub-standard conditions the club miraculously produced four professional cricketers, a number of County Cricket Club Second Eleven players and at least one Club Cricket Conference representative.

Credit must be showered on the late Robert 'Bob' Milne for his pioneering work in getting Carnegie Cricket Club as equal by the once racially prejudiced cricket clubs in south-east England.