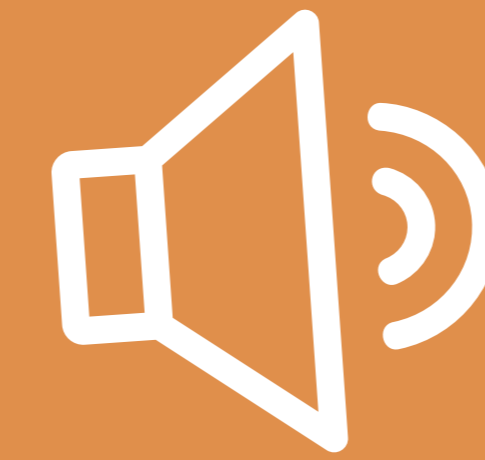


Grow Our Histories:

Peckham Heritage Oral Histories

In this project, the Peckham THI partnered with the South London Gallery to gather oral histories of people living or working in Peckham. In these recorded interviews, people with connections to the area generously share their unique stories, bringing personal experience and place together. Through early childhood memories, creative and cultural inheritances, local activism, and community connections, these interviews expand on Peckham's documented history and enrich our understanding of the area's heritage.

We are immensely grateful to the people who took part in this project.



Scan the QR code to listen to the recordings on the South London Gallery website.

The recordings will be permanently housed in Southwark Archives from Autumn 2022.

Or visit www.southlondongallery.org/archive-room/archive-and-local-history/oral-history-peckham/



Barry Jenkins

Born in Dulwich, 1944

Barry has lived and worked in Peckham all his life, doing body work for several local vehicle repair companies and owning Barry's Accident Repairs.



Barry shares his memories of the local businesses and the people he worked with around the Bussey Building and in Peckham in the 1960's.

"Rye Lane Peckham, up until the middle 1970's was a very good shopping centre. When I was a young man, there was a lady's dressmaker and five tailors and I used to have my suits made in Rye Lane. A lot of stuff was made in Peckham. In those days, it wasn't that everyone had to buy your own house, but the people who lived here were dockers and printers and these people were earning the money. The area rivalled Oxford Street - in the money it took...it was the place to shop. It's hard to imagine now. When I was a child, there was even a shop called Home and Colonial in Peckham!"



Dr Charmaine Brown

Born in Kingston, Jamaica 1962

Charmaine is a Senior Lecturer in Initial Teacher Education at the University of Greenwich.



Between 1989 -1994, Charmaine managed the Peckham Literacy Project and Peckham Publishing Project, known as The Book Place, in Peckham High Street.

"The first set of Caribbean families that came to Bellenden Road because, not only was it affordable, but a person was prepared to sell to them. Because even if it was affordable, due to the prejudice then, some people still refused to sell, depending who was going to be the buyer. From there, other families came to realise that this was a place that we can buy, where they will allow us to buy. So quite a few Caribbean families had houses on Bellenden Road. The community left a legacy, because they invested a lot in the social capital. They went from being tenants living in one room, to end up owning their own houses."



Anila Ladwa

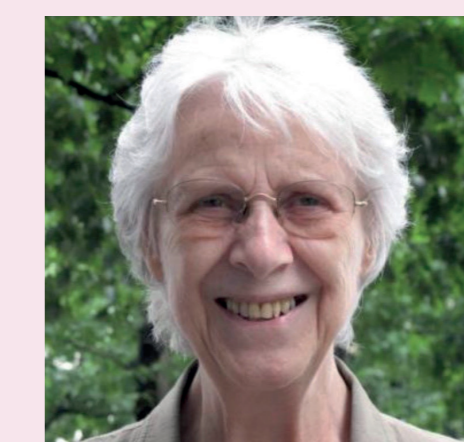
Born in London, 1971

Anila is a creative producer, working in interdisciplinary, social arts practice.



Area 10 was set up in 2002 in an abandoned timber yard in Peckham. It was a cultural space for artists, live music and mixed media arts events until 2009.

"The children around the building used to through things at us when we were first in there. But a couple of years later they could actually have a conversations about what live art was. We invited them in, we hosted them before the actual shows. Those kids grew up knowing what art was and I hope went on appreciating or becoming artists themselves. We had this impact and we engaged with local businesses and communities. It was the catalyst, alongside 'I Love Peckham', which was a platform for all sorts of other things to happen in the area. I think that our period, that time, was a catalyst for Peckham and loads of organisations exist today because of the work of Area 10."



Eileen Conn

Born on Tyneside, 1941

Eileen is a community activist and founder of Peckham Vision. She has campaigned to get people involved in shaping their environment locally.



Eileen has lived in Peckham since 1973, when she set up her first home. She recalls the campaigns she has led to protect buildings in Peckham town centre.

"The eighteenth century English writer, Daniel Defoe, wrote that one of the best views in the British Isles, was from Peckham looking towards the city, toward the river. So, archaeologically, historically, it's actually an important view to protect. We started a campaign about protecting the rooftop view, because we knew that if we worked hard, we'd probably get a long-term life for the Peckham multi-story car park. The top three levels, are occupied by a project called Bold Tendencies and Frank's Café and has become very well known, because of the amazing view from the roof."



Karin Greene

Born in Barbados, 1948

Karin has had a varied career; she went on to further studies and enjoys creative writing. She lives locally and is a mother and grandmother.



Karin came to London to find freedom at the age of 21. She recalls her first impressions on arrival and she describes some of her early experiences in Peckham.

"Peckham has gone through a lot of changes over the years, with different people and cultures, it's in perpetual change. Some of it I enjoy, some of it is enhancing my life and in the end, it might be for the greater good. We have to live together and we can all learn from each other. We don't have to adopt each other's lifestyle, but we can accommodate each other and if we change with it, we accept it and adapt to it."



Dimitri Launder

Born in Surrey, 1974

Dimitri is the Artist Gardener and is co-director of Arbonauts.



Area 10 was set up in 2002 in an abandoned timber yard in Peckham. It was a cultural space for artists, live music and mixed media arts events until 2009.

"People saw what we did in Area 10, saw the confidence that we did it with and that led to a shared confidence and other people taking it on and taking it forward, but we were the flag bearers for that. We created a network of cultural actors and practitioners which has developed in all sorts of different directions and have established a cultural quarter in Peckham that we couldn't even have visualised. Our legacy is there, but quite invisible."



Joy Gregory

Born in Bicester, 1959

Joy has lived in the area since 2013, teaching at Camberwell School of Art. She is an international artist working with photography and related media.



During lockdown, Joy walked in Burgess Park, engaging with fellow locals while connecting with nature and plants. This time inspired 'Invisible Life Force of Plants'.

"Peckham feels more solid, it has changed and it's safer. I'm not afraid to walk through Peckham at night, but I may have been back in the day. The sad side is that a lot of people who have ordinary jobs can't afford to live here anymore. Things have improved, but for me, it's about access. Whether or not you make a place your home, or if it's an investment, that is for me what matters. And I think we have more 'tourists' coming in, because there are more clubs and bars happening as well as new 'builds', attracting young people to the area."



Clement Ogbonnaya

Born in Lagos, Nigeria 1981

Clement has worked in events and hospitality, organising upscale late night entertainment. He is the owner and landlord of The Prince of Peckham pub.



Clement talks about establishing The Prince of Peckham, making a change and adding value to the local community.

"The best thing about Peckham is that it is a melting pot. It's the amount of 'crazies' in the nicest possible way, everyone is a character and there's a lot of individuality. There is no more vibrant a place in London than Peckham! These days, there's a lot more black social enterprises, working-class kids from the actual area, be that black or white and they are doing exciting stuff. And what I like about Prince, is that it's allowing all these like-minded individuals to exchange ideas in one space, to feel happy, to feel valued, to feel that they can make a change and I'm proud that there is a space that can accommodate them."