

The Notting Hill Carnival

di Sarah Gudgeon

1. Read

The first official Notting Hill Carnival was held in August 1964 in West London but its origins can be traced back further. In response to racial tensions, the Afro-Caribbean community organised its own carnival at St Pancras Town Hall, north London in 1959. Specifically, it was Claudia Jones, originally from Trinidad, who organised the festivities and she is known as the 'mother' of Notting Hill.

Notting Hill Carnival is a day when communities come together, to celebrate the abolition of slavery, the bright colours and exotic flavours of the Caribbean, to hear the beat of the brass drums and take part in Europe's biggest street festival. Over the years the lively celebrations have sometimes turned to violence. There was a riot during the 1976 parade where police struggled to control the crowds and even now huge numbers of party goers and too much alcohol mean that police sometimes have to intervene to break up fights. But the overall mood remains one of celebration, with people marching through some of London's best loved streets, like Portobello Road.

There has been an August bank holiday carnival in Notting Hill every year since 1964, and not even the rain can stop the Kings and Queens of this festival. Groups often spend all year preparing their themed floats and making elaborate costumes. The music is loud, the dancing is upbeat and with people from all over the country turning up for the event there is a great buzz of energy and a huge melting pot of languages, cultures and traditions.

2. Complete the sentences

- a. The first official Notting Hill carnival was in _____
- b. Claudia Jones is referred to as the _____ of the Notting Hill Carnival.
- c. The festival celebrates the end of _____.
- d. In 1976 police fought to _____ the crowds.
- e. The overall atmosphere is one of _____.
- f. The carnival has taken place for more than _____ years.

D? **Imagine you have attended the Notting Hill Carnival. Write a review for your local newspaper.**

Teachers Notes

2. a. 1964 b. mother c. slavery d. control e. celebration f. fifty (50)
3. Get the students to brainstorm what they could mention in the article (weather, food, music, people, floats, costumes) before they write their individual pieces.