



# GEORGE PADMORE INSTITUTE

## NEWSLETTER NO 20 – DECEMBER 2015

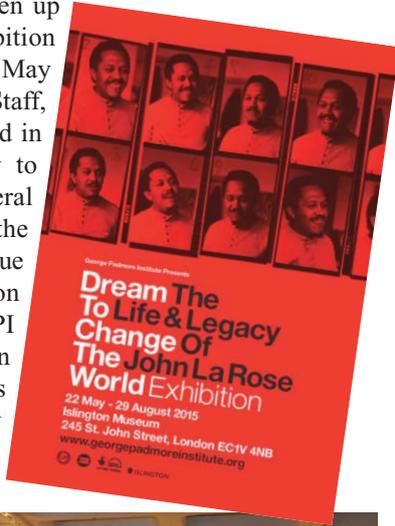
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*What a whirling dervish of a year it has been! Our Dream to Change the World project culminated with the long planned exhibition 'Dream to Change the World The Life & Legacy Of John La Rose': during the summer. The day to day work of the institute carried on amidst exhibition preparation and included far less GPI public events than in recent years, but these were no less enjoyable or stimulating for all involved.*

### The Dream to Change the World Archive Project

Much of the GPI's time was taken up with getting ready for the exhibition which ran for three months from May to August at Islington Museum. Staff, trustees and volunteers all pitched in with positive effort and energy to make the dream unfold over several months in the run up to the exhibition's opening in May and Sue McAlpine's practical contribution was greatly appreciated. The GPI wishes to especially thank Islington Museum's Mark Aston and his team for being so positively accommodating and helpful throughout the whole process.



*We discovered the word 'inspiring' innumerable times throughout the comments left by visitors.*

*so pleased to see this exhibit...  
fantastic exhibition  
John's legacy lives on, and exhibition shows the depth, the foundations he laid*

*It shows that nothing's possible, no mountains too high to climb.  
What an inspiring exhibition*

*I will be bringing my teenagers!!  
It was very good to go back in time and enjoy seeing all the activities we were involved in. Hope we can get more young people interested!*

*Very inspiring, a must for young children.  
Loved remembering the 60s*

*John and his work... continuity of information. A brilliant action of his life + legacy.*

*The three public outreach events organised to accompany the exhibition were all well attended in July and August.*

*By the end of the exhibition's run, we certainly felt that it had touched many of the visitors to Islington Museum and were delighted to find out that over 5,000 people had attended during the three month run!*

*Very inspiring. So much great information. Thank you.*

*Very proud to be part of making this exhibition and so inspired by the work of John La Rose, Sarah White and George Padmore Archive.*

*Thank you for such an inspiring, well-mounted,*



*The opening* took place on Thursday 22 May and was attended by various fans, friends, funders and well-wishers! Stuart Hobley the Chair of the HLF's London Committee was one of the evening's distinguished guests and speakers and expressed how impressed he was with the exhibition and with the work of the GPI. Rosemary Doyle, Head of Islington Libraries and Heritage Services also spoke with great enthusiasm about the council's facilitation in regard to the exhibition being housed at Islington Museum. It was a great evening with warm reviews from so many who attended!



*The "Dream Tree" proved popular with adults and children alike!*

We want to pay tribute to all our staff, volunteers, trustees and supporters who helped to make this exhibition the success it was. In particular we would like to single out the key role played by our project archivist, Sarah Garrod, who can now add the skill 'curator' to her many other accomplishments. Without her it would not have happened so successfully and smoothly.

We look to the future when we will be hoping to bring the exhibition to a much wider audience through portable banners, an online presence and an illustrated book.



## Dave Feickert Memorial

**Dave Feickert** was an activist in the trade union and community movements and a leading consultant in mine safety, energy, and ergonomics, who died in July 2014 in New Zealand. He was an old friend of the GPI. He and John spent many hours discussing workers' issues such as the introduction of new technology, the fight for a reduction in working hours and the international dimension of trade union politics. The GPI was very pleased to be able to work with Dave's first wife, Marina Lewycka, and his colleagues at the TUC to organise a memorial tribute in his honour. This took place on 12 June and the speakers included Lord John Monks, Max Farrar, Mick Clapham, Azim Hajee, Bernadette Segol, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Marina Lewycka. It was a very warm and successful evening bringing together friends representing Dave's many different interests and activities and the breadth and depth of his influence.



## Other public events throughout the year

Apart from the three public sessions held at the **Dream To Change the World Exhibition** in Islington Museum, the GPI put on three other events in its own meeting room: in March, prize winning novelist, short story writer and friend of the GPI, **Lawrence Scott** read from his new collection *Leaving By Plane Swimming Back Underwater and Other Stories* published by Polly Patullo's Papillotte Press; a month later we welcomed **Abdul Alkalimat** (long-time friend from Book Fair days) and **Kate Williams** from the University of Illinois to lead an illustrated talk in celebration and discussion of their book *Roots and Flowers: the life and work of the Afro-Cuban Librarian Marta Terry González*, which provided fascinating insights into the early and current years of the Cuban revolution; finally, in November, **John Cowley** gave an illustrated presentation on his *Creole Music of the French West Indies a discography 1900-1959*, which with the ensuing Q&A session proved very interesting and much conversation continued long after the official cut-off time! Earlier, in October, the GPI had worked with the British Library and Speaking Volumes on the event '**To Better Ourselves – Hidden Histories of Migration**' held at the British Library. The evening featured a quartet of live artists and writers who have all situated migration in their works: Vesna Goldsworthy, Johnny Pitts, Olive Senior and Dorothea Smartt with Barbara Roche as host.

## Archive Outreach

In addition to all the work she was doing on our exhibition and the final months of the five year **Dream to Change the World** project archivist, Sarah Garrod, also took part in several outreach events making the work of the GPI wider known. These ranged from Sarah and a volunteer talking at the Stuart Low Trust in Islington, a charity supporting individuals with mental health issues. "A fulfilling evening working with a challenging but welcoming audience who clearly enjoyed the event" to visits to the archive by students from New York and UCL, London; participation in Youth History Conference in Islington, where she and volunteers talked to groups of school children and manned a stall with information about the GPI. A positive event focusing on the question 'What's history got to do with us?'

This year marks the end of the GPI's **Dream to Change the World** HLF funded project. The GPI worked hard to achieve all the expected aims – cataloguing John's personal archives, conservation of fragile items, working with new volunteers, schools outreach, publication of the online Bookman essay on the early years of New Beacon's publishing and of John's *Unending Journey: selected writings* and finally the multi media exhibition. The GPI has actually gone to infinity and beyond in making it all possible! The experience has been one of collaboration, education, skills acquisition and lots of fun too! Many thanks to the GPI staff, volunteers and trustees for the years of commitment and enthusiasm.

The five year production could not have been possible without all involved.

Thank you all for your sterling support of the GPI throughout 2015. We always have plans swirling around in the pre-production ether, but need to catch our breath after what has been a fantastically busy year (five actually).

See you in 2016!

## Trustee and Supporters News Round Up

Trustee **Sharmilla Beezmohun's** Speaking Volumes organised a pioneering black British writers' showcase, taking ten writers to the East coast of the USA. They hope to be able to do something similar to the West Coast next year; **Dr Aggrey Burke**, the GPI's vice chair, published his paper 'The Extent of Conflict between being Black and being British' in the journal Criminal Justice Matters; long time supporter, **Margaret Busby**, was presented with the **UK African Heritage Achievers Recognition Award 2015**; the **Stuart Hall Foundation** was launched to provide support for students and researchers; **Roxy Harris**, trustee, retired from full time work in the Centre for Language Discourse and Communication, Kings College, London, where he has done pioneering research over the years; while **Gus John**, former trustee, celebrated his 70th birthday in March with two events at the Conway Hall and the BFI, at the latter Gary Younge was the keynote speaker and a film reflecting Gus's endless campaigning activities and concerns was shown. **Linton Kwesi Johnson** kept busy as usual both at home and abroad – he went to Brazil with the Denis Bovell Dub Band, participated in a celebration for Jayne Cortez held in South Africa and judged the SLAM poetry competition at BOCAS, Trinidad.

Finally apart from our very own **Dream To Change The World: the life and legacy of John La Rose** this has been a year of important exhibitions: the work of Bogle L'Ouverture Publications and the Walter Rodney Bookshop was celebrated in **No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960-1990**, together with a display of a wide selection of paintings and sculpture, held at the Guildhall Art Gallery; and just up the road at Autograph/Iniva there was a fascinating exhibition of B&W photographs of delegates to the historic **5th Pan African Congress** that was held in Manchester in 1945.

## Notices

Trustee, **Azim Hajee**, has been fighting an unfair dismissal case against Prospect, his union employers. The employment tribunal hearing is to be held 10-12 February 2016. Support for his campaign is welcome. Details from [azimhajee.campaign@gmail.com](mailto:azimhajee.campaign@gmail.com)

**Friends of JLR** web-based mailing list continues to provide for the exchange of information and ideas from members around the world. Anyone interested in joining should email Milverton Wallace on [milverton@gmail.com](mailto:milverton@gmail.com)

**Friends of JLR Crisis in the UK Group** continues to discuss current issues. This year saw the rise of the Jeremy Corbyn phenomenon raising interesting questions around the future of the Labour Party. The group also held public meetings on the Marikana massacre in South Africa, the Charlie Hebdo affair in Paris, and police killings in the USA.

**Snail mail and email:** If you are happy to receive information about GPI events by email, and are not already doing so, please send us your email address for future use. This will save us valuable funds.

**Social media:** The GPI is gradually entering the world of social media and you can follow our activities on both **facebook** and **twitter**. Do join in and give us your comments. And we have a **qr code** for use.

**Posters for sale:** The two **A2 silkscreen posters from the exhibition** are available at **£5 each from New Beacon Books**.

**Fundraising:** The GPI is always grateful to receive one off or regular donations to help sustain our archive and educational work. **Paypal donations can be made through GPI email.**