

... Marlene Ryder

Daphne Berkovi talks to Marlene about her life and work

Marlene Ryder has been a resident of Hampstead Garden Suburb for many years, originally coming to this area from her hometown, Kingston in Jamaica, after completing her school education at 18. She has had a long and successful career helping many of our citizens, which will come to light later.

Originally we had met through HGS U3A and as a member of our Book Group, Marlene then kindly agreed to be interviewed for Suburb News.

I firstly asked Marlene about her formative years in Jamaica. "I grew up in Kingston and attended my local school from kindergarten all the way through to my Higher School Certificate (equivalent to A levels) at 18. Thereafter I attended secretarial college."

So why the move to the London. "I came to London to study at the Regent Street Polytechnic for a degree, a BSc in Sociology. Afterwards I returned to Jamaica and joined the Civil Service, although I had to complete a stint in the UK Civil Service first. After four years I returned to London and married, settling first in Golders Green. For a short while I was employed as a teacher in a secondary school in Haringey, but left to work at the Institute of Education in London in the Department of Advanced Studies, engaged in the recruitment of teachers who were applying to study for a Masters or PhD in education."

Marlene then explained that she stayed there until her first son was born, "but I quickly

returned to work as I was fortunate to have help at home. Once my second son was born I stopped working and by then we were living in Brookland Rise in the Suburb. Both my sons attended Brookland School and then went to Christ College."

Marlene related that, once her second son had started primary school, she returned to work embarking on a very long career with the Citizens Advice Bureau. "I originally started working in Camden with the Citizens Advice Bureau, until I was recruited to become the Director of the CAB in Brent." I worked there for over 20 years until my retirement."

I asked Marlene about her experience there. "Well I found my work very meaningful; helping so many people, it was a privilege. Not only assisting many individuals to understand their rights, but also being able to help them access them as well. Also, I was working with a wonderful team of colleagues, whom I still have contact with." Marlene told me that the CAB in Willesden has grown from sharing part of the building in Willesden, to now occupying the full premises.

Alongside her CAB work, Marlene spoke about her role as a Non-Executive Director at Central Middlesex Hospital. "I was invited by the Medical Director of the hospital to become a member of the board; a post which I held for eight years."

It was then that I broached the subject of Marlene's MBE, which I had found out about by doing my own research. I asked

Marlene why she was given the award. "The award was given to me because of my services at Brent CAB, yet I have no idea who put my name forward." She then showed me the photograph of her receiving the award from the Queen; and I asked her about the ceremony. "Well, I went to Buckingham Palace to receive my award and was welcomed and made to feel very comfortable. All the recipients were lined up in a queue. The Queen was very well briefed, and knew about my background." Marlene explained that she was allowed to bring two guests, which were her sons, and after the ceremony they celebrated by having a lunch at the Savoy with friends.

She also explained that she moved from Brookland Rise to Rotherwick Road and subsequently settled in Willifield Way, her present home now for ten years. She is now retired and has always enjoyed travelling, either visiting her family in the West Indies, her son in China with his family, or to Africa and India.

As for life in the Suburb, Marlene revealed that she came here because the Suburb was a conservation area, which was of particular interest. "I love the trees here; and this area is so different to the rest of London; the design and scale of the cottages are unique." This was gratifying to hear and understandable from someone who has made the greater part of her life here on the Suburb and her appreciation of this community **S**



Double glazing for thermal efficiency

There are a number of ways to improve the thermal efficiency of your home. One of those is by installing double glazed windows.

It is usually possible to manufacture double glazed windows, both in timber and steel that carefully match the original designs. The Trust can supply the names of specialist manufacturers of timber and steel framed double glazed windows.



Trust consent is required for the replacement of windows. The application process can be quite straightforward. Window drawings will need to be supplied and in some cases a sample window may be required. This information is necessary to ensure the replacement windows match the originals. For further advice on the application process please contact the Trust office or email planning@hgstrust.org.

Alternatively, it is possible to improve the thermal efficiency of original windows. Window frames can be made more efficient by weather stripping to exclude draughts. Secondary glazing can also be fitted internally. This is less costly than replacing the windows. Care must be taken to ensure that the secondary glazing is not very visible from the exterior.

Should you wish to refer to our Design Guidance you may access it via our website www.hgstrust.org or by picking up a copy from the Trust office.



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