

An “uplifting” tribute is to be made to the many first-generation Jamaicans who travelled 5,000 miles to make a new life in the city of Leeds.

Jamaica Society Leeds has been awarded £81,900 for the project, entitled Eulogy.

An exhibition in Leeds Central Library plus a wealth of workshops and events will celebrate the lives, heritage and contributions of those people who made the long journey from the Caribbean island and who have since passed away.

Eulogy Programme Director and Exhibition Curator Susan Pitter said:

> “Eulogy will be a touching, uplifting tribute to a generation who left everything and everyone 5,000 miles behind to answer Britain’s call to its Commonwealth citizens.”

She added that the project: “reflects not only the DNA of the Jamaican community - but of the city too and I am honoured to help protect and share their inspirational stories”.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this innovative project will work with the Society’s members, local community, and families of first-generation Jamaicans.

The heart of the project will be collecting funeral programmes. These often elaborate printed booklets, typical in Jamaican and other Caribbean communities, contain eulogies and photos which had been taken to send to family back

in Jamaica. Like many new-to-Leeds West Indians, Jamaicans often used Gerald Donne Photography at 16 then 105 Chapeltown Road.

Telling stories

The Eulogy Exhibition will be in place from 1 August to 1 September 2019 in Leeds Central Library.

The project will include a series of workshops and events for all ages in memoir writing, storytelling, ancestry, Jamaican culture and heritage.

Volunteers will receive training in heritage and other skills and will help to launch a Jamaica Heritage Trail in the permanent collections of Leeds Libraries. They will also help with the collection of photography and community interviews.

Eulogy is planned to run until early 2020.

David Renwick, Head of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “We believe that heritage should be inclusive and want to empower communities to explore and tell their stories… We’re delighted, that thanks to National Lottery players, we can support the Jamaica Society to explore and celebrate the contributions of the Jamaican community to our heritage.”

Get involved

Collection event

The first event for sharing photos, funeral programmes and other items will be held:

- 1-6pm **17 March 2019** at Jamaica House, 277 Chapeltown Road, Leeds LS7 3HA

Get in touch

- Email: eulogy@jamaicasocietyleeds.co.uk
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram

Photo credit: Daniel Bloomfield, who came to Leeds from Jamaica in 1954. The studio photo is typical of those included in funeral programmes of first generation Jamaicans and other West Indians. Credit: Gerald Donne.