

Olive Osborne

■ Biography

Date of birth: 6th November 1941

Place of birth: St. Andrews, Jamaica

Date of arrival in UK: 1960

Olive Osborne, who was originally called Olive Dennie, was raised by her grandmother, Dorcus, in Jamaica. There were not many opportunities for her to get an education so she left school early to become a dressmaker. In 1960, Olive's aunt, Lucy Dixon, asked her to come and help look after her children in England.



Portrait of Olive Osborne
Photo courtesy of Karl Ritchie

Olive started work as a nursing assistant for the National Health Service in Wolverhampton and completed a hairdressing course. Olive also met and married Albert Osborne and they moved to Ashley Road in St. Paul's, Bristol. They later lived in Badminton Road with their children.

At this time, Olive was a hairdresser, housewife and mother all at the same time, but her children remember her always being there for them. Early in the 1970s, Olive got involved with pyramid selling. This was a famous scam, which was a disaster for many people, and she later got involved in the campaign to ban it. This then drew Olive's attention to other issues of injustice.

Olive supported parents who felt their children had been wrongly excluded by going into schools with them. She helped to start the first literacy classes and enrichment sessions for Black children at the Inkworks (now Kuumba) in St. Paul's. These first efforts led to the formation of the Bristol Community Growth and Support Association (BCGSA) in 1975, which Olive managed in an unpaid capacity. Olive helped set up activities such as sewing classes for women, an Elders' club and youth discussion groups.

After the St. Paul's Riots, the BCGSA received funding and Olive established a day nursery and an early learning centre in Brighton Street near the Black and White Cafe. She wanted to show that this was an area that could have positive influences. A hand painted sign on one of its walls read "I complained I had no shoes 'til I met a man who had no feet."

In 1980, Olive became the co-ordinator of the BCGSA, a post she kept until 1996.

In the 80s, Olive started a drop-in day centre for the growing population of older Caribbean people at Brighton Street where Caribbean meals and craft classes were provided with the help of Social Services. This was later moved to Ludlow Close.

Olive also supported women who were homeless and had mental health issues and started a hostel for them. Olive worked tirelessly for the community. She was recognised for giving so much of her life to helping other people. She was given these awards:

- The Caribbean Times Award in 1984.
- The British Empire Medal in 1992.
- An Honorary Degree from University of the West of England in 1993 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the city.
- The Gleaner Company UK Limited and Jamaican National Overseas UK Limited Certificate of Merit in 1994.
- The South West African and Caribbean Community Award in 1995.

Olive's commitment, drive and determination helped to ensure that the least privileged in society received a better deal.



Olive Osborne receiving her honorary degree

Photo courtesy of Karl Ritchie

Olive's message is:

“It's important to draw strength and support from your elders to guide you through life.”

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■ Teachers' Background Notes

(Based on an interview with her daughter Angela Osborne, as Olive now lives in Jamaica.)

Olive Osborne (née Dennie) was raised by her maternal grandmother, Dorcus, a strong-minded, fiercely independent woman with whom she had a close bond. Her mother, Jemima, also a strong woman was very important to her and both women inspired her. Dorcus lived a natural life staying in touch with her roots. Like many of the women in her family, Olive has a passion for education, unflagging self-discipline and a determination to 'do the right thing'.

The lack of educational opportunities in Jamaica meant Olive left school early to become a dressmaker. Olive had a daughter called Violet, but in 1960 her aunt, Lucy Dixon, asked her to come and help her look after Lucy's children. Olive found herself in Wolverhampton, England.

Olive started work as a nursing auxiliary for the National Health Service in Wolverhampton and also completed a hairdressing course. Olive met Albert Osborne, and shortly afterwards they moved with their daughter Angela and her Aunt Lucy to Ashley Road, Bristol. After the birth of Sharon, Olive and Albert moved to Badminton Road where their son Andrew was born.

Olive was a hairdresser, housewife and mother all at the same time. A room for hairdressing at the top of the house meant it was always full of people waiting to have their hair done. The children went to Brownies and Guides, and on Sundays to City Temple Church and Sunday School. They belonged to youth clubs and Olive made sure that she knew the club leaders and kept in touch with what the children were doing. Her children remember her always being there for them, but Olive often had to work Saturday and Sunday nights in a nursing home while Albert took care of the children after his working day.

Early in the 1970s, Olive got involved with pyramid selling. This scheme appealed to people who worked from home, as they could buy products and sell them to friends. However, the notorious pyramid selling scam was a disaster for many who lost their homes and health, or even took their own lives.

James Hunt, a Barbadian from Birmingham, organised people from pyramid groups into self-help groups. He campaigned to ban pyramid selling and to compensate its victims and also drew attention to other issues. This led Olive and others in Bristol to lobby Parliament, attend rallies, write letters and organise meetings.

Major cities had similar groups that held regular national rallies. Olive would book the coaches for their gatherings, which addressed issues of police injustice, the National Front, underachievement at schools and deportations. This was the birth of a quiet activist.

In Bristol, Olive would support parents who felt their children had been wrongly excluded by accompanying them into schools. She helped to found the first literacy classes and enrichment sessions for Black children at the Inkworks (now Kuumba) in Bristol. These first efforts led to the formation of the Bristol Community Growth and Support Association (BCGSA) in 1975, which Olive managed in an unpaid capacity. The BCGSA also became affiliated to local groups namely The Inkworks, Albert Villas Advice Centre and St. Werburgh's Community Centre. She helped set up activities such as sewing classes for women, an Elders' club and youth discussion groups.

After the St. Paul's riots, the BCGSA received funding and Olive established a day nursery in Brighton Street and an early learning centre near the Black and White Café. She wanted to show the positive aspects of the area. In 1980 Olive became the co-ordinator of the BCGSA, a post she kept until 1996.

In the 80s, she started a drop-in day centre for the growing population of older Caribbean people at Brighton Street. Caribbean meals and craft classes were provided with the help of Social Services and this later moved to Ludlow Close.

She felt that the government's care in the community policy left people who had mental health problems wandering the streets. Olive took care of one homeless woman with such problems, then she established a small hostel for other women like her. Olive was awarded the Caribbean Times Award in 1984. She also assisted community organisations, including the Bristol Racial Equality Council, and at the same time nursed her seriously ill husband, Albert until his death in 1990.

When Olive was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1992 she requested that the Lord Lieutenant present it at Ludlow Close Day Centre for older people in St. Paul's. There he was able to witness the well run and happy atmosphere of the Centre.

Olive's other awards include a Master of Arts in 1993, The Gleaner UK and Jamaican National Overseas UK Certificate of Merit in 1994, and the South West African and Caribbean Community Award in 1995. Olive's commitment, drive and determination helped to ensure that the least privileged in society received a better deal.

Olive's message is:

"It's important to draw strength and support from your elders to guide you through life."

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■ Suggested Activities

These are suggested activities based on Olive Osborne's biography. The activities in bold print have a detailed lesson plan on following pages

Foundation Stage/ KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities	KS3 Activities
<p>Hairdressing Create hair salon in role play area. Include products for Black hair and Black hair magazines to look at. Ask African-Caribbean parent/carer to demonstrate plaiting.</p>	<p>Awards Explore different awards. Make medals or certificates. Award pupils based on skills and achievements. Hold an award ceremony. OBE information*</p>	<p>Famous Jamaican Women Louise Bennett – poet and storyteller. Jean Binta Breeze – poet See pack from EMAS for both these poets.*</p>
<p>Older people Who are the oldest people we know? Visit to an older peoples' home to sing a song and talk together.</p>	<p>Bright Eye Poem* Read Poem Share experiences about being apart from family or away from home for the first time.</p>	<p>Caribbean newspapers Using Caribbean newspapers explore audience, issues and adverts.</p>
<p>Sewing Ask for parents/carers, older people and others from the community to help the pupils do some sewing – create a class patchwork.</p>	<p>Commitment, drive and determination Explore meanings and derivations of these words. Do we or anyone we know have any of these qualities? How can we develop them?</p>	<p>Supplementary Schools Survey of supplementary schools available in Bristol. See CYPS Equalities and Inclusion Team webpage for Supplementary Schools' Directory. Compare supplementary schools with mainstream, discuss why pupils choose to go.</p>

*See the resource list for details

■ Lesson Plan: Hair (PSED, K&U, CLL,MD)

Learning objectives

- To use descriptive and comparative language.
- To learn more about how we can care for our hair.
- To learn more about the role of hairdressers and barbers.
- To have a developing awareness and respect of the experiences of others.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Hairdresser	Biography and pictures of Olive Osborne	Whole class
Barber	Items for role play area.	Small group
Vocabulary to describe hair	Books, magazines and pictures about hair and hairstyles (to ensure ethnic diversity and gender).	Individual child

Suggested activities

- Show pupils the picture of Olive Osborne and talk about it. Tell them her story, responding to questions and generating discussion.
- Visit to a local hairdresser or barber.
- Invite a hairdresser or barber in to talk about their job and the tools they use.
- Read and talk about books about hair.
- Talk about hair care - washing, brushing etc.
- Tell each other about their hair, who cuts it, when, where how etc.

Opportunities for child initiated experiences

- Set up hair dresser/barber in role play area- include products such as combs for Black hair. Towels, phone and book for appointments, combs, brushes. Magazines and pictures (maybe not scissors!)
- Books, magazines and pictures about hair and hair care.
- Use ICT programme to choose hair styles.
- Provide range of materials to make and plait hair for pictures/models

Recall – Recall with pupils what we have learnt.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils have experienced descriptive language and vocabulary.
- Pupils show developing respect for difference in others.
- Pupils know about Olive Osborne and her contribution to Bristol

Parent/Carer involvement

Invite African-Caribbean parent/carers in to plait their children's hair.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Lesson Plan: Awards (Art, Design, PSHE)

Learning objectives

- To know that we can be rewarded for our talents and work.
- To communicate positive things about ourselves and each other.
- To know how Black and minority ethnic people contribute to Bristol

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Award	Olive Osborne's biography and picture	
Medal	OBE information – Order of the British Empire*	

Suggested activities

- Read Olive Osborne's biography and share her picture.
- Share any previous knowledge about awards the children are aware of including sports, work, voluntary, for young people and adults. Discuss why and how it makes us feel to get an award. Collect examples from newspapers. Look at photographs of different sorts of medals/awards.
- Ask pupils to discuss what they would like to receive an award for and to nominate another member of the class for an award. Design and if practical make an award.
- Use the pupils' designs to give an award regularly in the class. Class teacher will need to think carefully about each pupil and give award for something the pupil has excelled in – include full range of curriculum and social aspects.

Plenary

- Show each other our designs and share skills or achievements we are proud of.
- Celebrate what a talented group of pupils we are.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils know about Olive Osborne's life and her contribution to Bristol.
- Pupils have considered awards and designed a medal or award.
- Pupils know that we all have strengths in different areas.

Assessment opportunities

How pupils show pride in themselves.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Pupils to talk to parents/carers about their strengths.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Lesson Plan: BME Newspapers (English, Media)

KSS3

2:10

Olive Osborne Lesson Plan

Learning objectives

- To learn the extent and the importance of the Caribbean press in this country.
- To use enquiry and information processing skills.
- To understand that Olive Osborne's awards were prestigious.
- To know how Black and minority ethnic people contribute to Bristol.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Media Article Advertisement Press	Biography/picture of Olive Osborne Copies of The Voice, Caribbean Times, New Nation, and the Jamaican Gleaner.*	Pairs

Suggested activities

- Read Olive Osborne's biography. Discuss the awards that she received and any issues that arise.
- Give pairs of pupils pages from the newspapers. Pupils to read articles and adverts.
- Ask them to comment on who the audience is and how they know.
- Using the newspaper consider what issues this audience are currently concerned with.
- Pupils to rank three adverts according to their effectiveness and be able to justify their decision.
- Ask pupils to predict how another minority ethnic group's (Somali, Indian, Pakistani) newspaper might be similar or different regarding the issues and adverts. Invite pupils to bring another newspaper to the next lesson to study.

Plenary

- Ask pupils what they learnt about the African Caribbean community in this country. Would they want a British paper if they lived in another part of the world? If so, what would they want covered in it – news from 'home' or news related to British people in their new country?

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils are familiar with range of the Caribbean press in the UK.
- Pupils have considered the audience and effectiveness of adverts.
- Pupils know about Olive Osborne and her contribution to Bristol.

Assessment opportunities

Enquiry skills and information processing.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Pupils to bring another newspaper from a minority ethnic group to next lesson.

*See the resource list for details

Black Bristolians

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■ Resources

- Hair books and magazines
- Directory of Bristol Supplementary Schools on the CYPS website. (www.bristol-cyps.org.uk/services/eit)
- Copies of The Voice, Caribbean Times, New Nation, and the Jamaican Gleaner available in local shops in St. Paul's and Easton.
- Website: ltzcaribbean.com
- EMAS Poetry Pack contains information and poems from Louise Bennett and poet and storyteller Jean Binta Breeze, including Bright Eye poem. Phone EMAS 0117 903 1365.
- OBE information – Order of the British Empire sheet included (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_of_the_order_of_the_British_Empire)

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■ Resources: Order of the British Empire

The **Most Excellent Order of the British Empire** is a British order of chivalry established on 4 June 1917 by King George V. The Order includes five classes in civil and military divisions; in decreasing order of seniority, these are:

- Knight Grand Cross or Dame Grand Cross (GBE)
- Knight Commander or Dame Commander (KBE or DBE)
- Commander (CBE)
- Officer (OBE)
- Member (MBE)

Only the two highest ranks entail admission into knighthood, an honour allowing the recipient to use the title 'Sir' (male) or 'Dame' (female) before their name, so long as that person is a national of a realm where the Queen is Head of State. If not, the recipient may use the honour but not the title before their name.

There is also a related British Empire Medal, whose recipients are not members of the Order, but who are nonetheless affiliated with the Order. This medal is no longer conferred in the United Kingdom or its dependencies, but is still used by the Cook Islands and by some other Commonwealth nations.

The Order's motto is *For God and the Empire*. It is the most junior of the British orders of chivalry and has more members than any other.

From Wikipedia