

The Burgess Family

■ Biography

Date of birth: Sonia 10th May 1950

Place of birth: Jamaica

Date of arrival in Bristol:

Sonia 1961, Denzil 1962

Cassita and Lambert Walker, came to Bristol in 1954 and had a house in Montpelier where they helped other new arrivals find their feet.



Denzil and Sonia Burgess
Photo courtesy of the Burgess family

Their daughter, (Beverley) Sonia Burgess came to Britain in 1961, and her husband (Vincent) Denzil Burgess came in 1962. Sonia's first impression of Bristol was that it looked dark and full of factories and bombsites. When Denzil first saw snow it is said that he hid under the bed as he thought the sky was falling in!

Their families were all successful business people. Sonia's mother ran a nursery, made wedding dresses and cakes and helped people with their finances. She helped people who didn't know the system like her. She also made buns and hard dough bread. Denzil's family were farmers, bakers and ran restaurants. They lived in Montpelier and at that time weren't allowed into St. Paul's by their parents. Sonia went to Mina Road Junior School where she says that the white children were nice to her. She remembers that a teacher, Mr. Dear, never allowed racist remarks, but the school did not allow Black children to do 'O' levels. Sonia met Denzil when she was twelve. After leaving school, she worked as an office junior and in 1971 she and Denzil were married.

Sonia and Denzil bought houses to rent out in the early 1970s, but then there were new rent laws and complicated regulations that made things difficult. The economy was bad and then Denzil had a car accident. They lost their houses, forcing them to start again with their three children and one on the way, so they went back to live with Sonia's parents in Montpelier. Sonia's parents helped and they bought a house on Drummond Road which they then sold, and were able to buy a house in Filton.

Sonia was studying Business Studies and Denzil was working for an engineering company, but he gave this up to be closer to the family and went into pub management. Their first pub was the Lord Nelson in Barton Hill, which had a hall at the back where they held parties. Then in 1983,

they raised money from the family to start the Tropic Club which got a lot of bookings including very famous acts like Maxi Priest, Desmond Dekker, Geno Washington and the Wild Bunch, (who also did graffiti on the wall for them after a fire in 1984). The club went on until 1994, then changed its name to Loco but has now been converted into flats. The Tropic Club is still talked about by people who were young and enjoyed their music at the time.

Sonia and Denzil later bought the Bank, previously the Golden Exchange in Stokes Croft, and turned it into a pub, which their children took over when Denzil went to Jamaica in 1991. The children, Bentley and Martino, bought the Lakota nightclub which was very popular between 1994 and 1998. People would fly in from around the world to go there and they put on very famous acts such as Cream and Ministry of Sound. The club also toured worldwide, and were the first club to tour South Africa after Apartheid and to hold Black and white events. The Lakota closed for redecorating in 1998 and reopened in 1999 but they felt it was never the same and it is now rented out.

They also managed a few DJs and had their own record label. In 1997 they opened Budokan, a restaurant in Colston Street in partnership with others. Martino Burgess now part owns Bar One 30 on Stokes Croft with her husband Chris Wicks who also owns Bells Diner in Montpelier.



Bentley, Martino, Sonia and Denzil Burgess
Photo courtesy of the Burgess family

Sonia's message is:

“When times are difficult, don't quit, keep trying!”

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■ Teachers' Background Notes

Cassitta and Lambert Walker, came to Bristol in 1954 and settled in a house in Montpelier where they helped to set new arrivals on their feet. They ran a 'partners', which was a system where everyone puts some money each week into a fund and each person has a turn at taking the weekly amount. It was a way of helping people to save money. Cassitta also ran a nursery and made wedding dresses and cakes, organised people's finances and filled in their forms. She helped people who didn't know the system like her. She also made buns and hard dough bread. The family owned about four or five houses, which they rented out. Lambert set up each of his children with a house.

Their daughter (Beverley) Sonia Burgess and her husband, (Vincent) Denzil Burgess, were both born in Jamaica and met when they were twelve years old. Denzil loved cricket and played for three teams. Some of his friends made it into the Jamaican team but Denzil came to England so did not have that chance.

Sonia came to Britain in 1961 and Denzil in 1962. Sonia's first impression of Bristol was that it looked dark and full of factories and bombsites. When Denzil first saw snow he hid under the bed because he thought the sky was falling in. Sonia went to Mina Road Junior School where she remembers that the white children were nice to her. At Baptist Mills Senior School, she remembers that some of the teachers such as Mr. Dear (nicknamed 'Staggy') never allowed racist remarks, but that the school didn't let the Black children take 'O' levels. Paul Stephenson went into the school to teach Current Affairs and he was an inspiration and organised camping trips with the boys.

Both families were business people. Sonia's family were teachers and farmers and Denzil's were bakers, farmers and ran restaurants. Sonia was part of a large family whose members started living in the family home and then bought their homes in the same road. They both lived in Montpelier and weren't allowed into St. Paul's by their parents.

After leaving school Sonia worked as an office junior and then married Denzil in 1971. Sonia and Denzil bought houses to rent in the early seventies but new rent control laws and complicated regulations made this difficult. The economy was bad and then Denzil had a car accident. They borrowed money and lost the houses including their own home. They had to pay out a great deal to finance companies and solicitors.

Forced to start again, Sonia, who was pregnant, Denzil, and their three children went back to live in Montpelier with Sonia's parents. Her parents helped and they bought a house on Drummond Road with a sitting tenant. They sold this to Knightstone Housing Association and were then able to buy a house in Filton.

Sonia was studying Business Studies and Denzil was working for an engineering company that sent him all over the country. He gave this up to be closer to the family and eventually went into pub management. Their first pub was the Lord Nelson in Barton Hill which had a hall at the back where they held parties.

They then took over the Beaufort Pub in Montpelier from 1980 to 1983 and then raised money from the family to start the Tropic Club. Initially the builders wrecked the place, which led to a court case, but they worked the club from upstairs until they had enough money to make the repairs. When another club, the Dugout closed in 1983, the Tropic Club got a lot of bookings including acts such as The Wild Bunch.

In 1984 there was a fire at the Tropic Club. Customers came to repaint it and The Wild Bunch created graffiti on the wall. Many acts played there including Maxi Priest, Desmond Decker, Geno Washington, Oasis, The House Martins and Portishead. The Tropic Club continued until 1994 then changed its name to Loco but it has now been converted into flats. In 1987 Sonia and Denzil bought the Bank, previously the Gold Exchange and turned it into a pub. Denzil went to Jamaica in 1991 and the children took over the clubs.

George Leonard, the owner of another club in Stokes Croft, couldn't afford to finish refurbishing it so Bentley Burgess (Sonia and Denzil's son), used his parents money to finish the job. They opened it at the end of 1993 but George became ill and the bank repossessed it. The club went to a sealed bid set at £275,000 so Bentley Burgess and his sister Martino saw an advertisement in the paper for lending money on the basis of a business plan and they made a bid of £275,600 and bought the club.

The Lakota was at its peak between 1994 and 1998. People would fly in from all around the world and they had acts such as Cream and Ministry of Sound. The club also toured and went to places such as Poland, New York, Barcelona, Ibiza, San Francisco, Miami, Italy, France and it was the first club to tour South Africa (just after apartheid in 1996) where they held Black and white events.

They also managed a few DJs and had their own record label, sold clothing and sold merchandise and tickets for about a year from a shop on Park Street. The Lakota closed for refurbishment in 1998 and reopened it in 1999 but it was never the same and they felt it had had its day. It is now rented to promoters.

In 1997 Martino and Bentley opened Budokan, a restaurant in Colston Street, in partnership with others. Martino Burgess part owns Bar One 30 with her husband Chris Wicks who also owns Bell's Diner.

Sonia's message is:

"When times are difficult, don't quit, keep trying."

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■ Suggested Activities

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

Foundation Stage/ KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities	KS3 Activities
<p>My Family Who is in my family? Share family pictures. Create multilingual display using words such as father, mother, brother, sister, carer etc.</p>	<p>New Arrivals What is it like to be a new arrival? How do we welcome and look after new arrivals in our school?</p>	<p>Business Plan What would be some of the difficulties a new arrival to this country might encounter in setting up a business such as a restaurant? How would you resolve them? What organisations might help/support? (Citizenship).</p>
<p>Food Taste some Jamaican bun and hard dough bread with butter or cheese. Make some simple Caribbean food and drink. Use parent/carer or member of Caribbean community if possible.</p>	<p>Hard Dough Bread Buy, observe and taste different forms of bread from across the world including hard dough bread. Make some form of bread. Links with science.</p>	<p>Music The Tropic Club and Lakota Club were two of very few places that would play Black music. Listen to the music of some of the groups mentioned. Consider how the times influenced the music. (Music).</p>
<p>Restaurant Create a restaurant in role play area. Use as wide a variety of food and cooking utensils as possible.</p>	<p>Running a Restaurant Design a Caribbean menu. Visit website of the Plantation restaurant in Bristol and choose a meal for a special occasion. www.plantationrestaurant.biz</p>	<p>Family Tree Use Burgess family biography to draw up their family tree. Research own family history and present as a family tree. (History).</p>

*See the resource list for details

The Burgess Family

■ Lesson Plan: Cafes and Restaurants

(PSED, K&U, CLL)

FS

2:2

Learning objectives

- To experience a visit to a café/restaurant.
- To talk about their experiences and express a personal opinion.
- To know that Black and minority ethnic people have contributed to the food industry and businesses in Bristol.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Menu	Biography/picture of the Burgess family	Whole class
Café	Plantation restaurant website*	Small groups
Restaurant	Variety of play food, cooking utensils	
Waiter	Caribbean food	
Chef		
Order		

Suggested activities

- Visit a local café or restaurant.
- Taste some Caribbean food and drink.
- Make some Caribbean food with a parent/carer or member of the Caribbean community.
- Talk about the Burgess family and the variety of businesses they ran.
- Prepare some food for parents/carers when they return to pick pupils up.

Opportunities for child initiated experiences

- Role play area – café/restaurant. Equip with play food and cooking utensils that reflect diversity, menus, pad of paper etc. Encourage pupils to take turns being the cook, waiter and people coming to the café.
- Writing area has a range of menus and writing materials for pupils to create own menu.

Recall – their visit and learning.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils have experienced going to a café and can talk about the different roles of people in the café.
- Pupils can express likes and dislikes about food.
- Pupils can taste something they may not have tasted before.
- Pupils know that the Burgess family ran a number of businesses in Bristol.

Parent/Carer involvement

Encourage parents/carers to widen pupils' diet- try something different.

*See the resource list for details

The Burgess Family

■ Lesson Plan: New Arrivals (PSHE, Literacy)

Learning objectives

- To explore how people new to a situation might feel.
- To understand how we can welcome new people to our school.
- To know about the Burgess family businesses and their contribution to Bristol.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Arrivals	Biography/picture of the Burgess family	Whole class
Excited	School's own Induction Policy/Pack	Pairs
Nervous	EMAS example of guidance	Groups
Apprehensive	for New Arrivals*	
Positive		
Negative		
Welcome Pack		

Suggested activities

- Read/share biography and pictures.
 - Paired work. Talk about being in new situations. Feedback to whole class.
 - Drama. Small group work. Pupils to act out being in a new situation e.g. going to a new school/new country. Talk about how you feel. Make a list of positive and negative words.
 - Paired work. Take the list of negative words and talk about how we could help new arrivals who are feeling this way.
 - Discuss how the school welcomes new arrivals. A few pupils could interview the school secretary and the headteacher. Does the school have a good system? The class could make some suggestions on how the school/class welcomes a new arrival. Pupils work in groups to contribute to a welcome pack.
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Plenary

- Review the welcome pack produced by the class.
 - Consider how we welcome people in the wider community.
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Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- To empathise with people.
 - To know how we can welcome people to our school/community.
 - Pupils know about the Burgess family's life and their contribution to Bristol.
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Assessment opportunities

Collaborative work, empathy.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Interview parent/carers about new situations.

*See the resource list for details

The Burgess Family

■ Lesson Plan: Business Plan (History/PSHE)

KSS3

2:2

Learning objectives

- To consider the difficulties facing new arrivals opening a business.
- To discuss how they can be resolved.
- To know how Black and minority ethnic people contribute to businesses in Bristol.

Key words/phrases	Resources	Organisation/Grouping
Organisations	Biography/picture of the Burgess family Helpful organisations.*	Whole class Groups

Suggested activities

- Read/share the Burgess family biography and pictures.
- Discuss the difficulties they might have experienced as new arrivals in the country and Bristol.
- Brainstorm what difficulties new arrivals who are opening a business face now. Groups to discuss how they could be resolved.
- Share information on organisations (local and national) who might support and help. Groups to research these organisations and prepare presentation.

Plenary

- Groups present findings to class.

Learning outcomes/Success criteria

- Pupils know how the Burgess family businesses have developed and contributed to Bristol.
- Pupils have considered difficulties facing new arrivals now and in the past and how to resolve them.
- Pupils are familiar with some organisations who might support new businesses.

Homework task or Parent/Carer involvement

Interview parents/carers and friends about their experiences of being somewhere new.

*See the resource list for details

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■ Resources

- Plantation Restaurant. www.plantationrestaurant.biz
- Organisations that might support new businesses- resource included.
- EMAS example of guidance for New Arrivals.
http://www.bristol-cyps.org.uk/services/emas/practice/in_schools.html

Contact details

Name:	Sonia Burgess
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Email:	bevburgess@btinternet.com
Willing to be contacted by teachers for further questions?	Yes
Willing to come into school to talk to pupils?	Yes

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■ Resources: Helpful organisations



SUPPORT AGAINST RACIST INCIDENTS

Support Against Racist Incidents (S.A.R.I.)
PO Box 2454, Bristol BS2 2WX
www.sariweb.org.uk/index.html



Ujima House, 97-107 Wilder Street,
St Paul's, Bristol BS2 8QU
Tel: 0117 942 9555

CEED's mission is to 'improve the economic well being of those currently disadvantaged in the labour market and in business, in particular those from minority ethnic groups'.

www.ceed.co.uk



Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The new Commission will be a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and independent influential champion whose purpose is to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people and protect human rights.

The CEHR will take an active role in helping to achieve change to benefit some of the most vulnerable and least well represented people in our society.

<http://www.cehr.org.uk/>

BRAVE

www.brave.org.uk

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS

BRAVE Enterprise has helped thousands of entrepreneurs develop and run successful and profitable businesses.

BRAVE is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based in Bristol.

BRAVE provides support to:

- Trading businesses looking to develop and grow
- Business needing solutions to problems
- Start-up businesses
- Those thinking about starting a business or becoming self-employed for the first time

www.brave.org.uk



Black Development Agency (BDA) has been providing support and services to Bristol's Black Voluntary Sector for over ten years.

www.blackdeva.org.uk

Voscur

Voscur is a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).

Voscur works to support and develop a thriving, effective and influential voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Bristol.

<http://www.voscur.org/>