

1958 REMEMBERED RIOT REPORTS

Manchester Guardian, Tuesday September 2, **Cries of 'Lynch him' as whites run riot** – 30 charged as race riots grip west London – Blacks and Asians attacked in streets: The Notting Hill area of London was again the scene of racial disorder last evening. Early today the police stated that about 30 people had been charged with having offensive weapons and with insulting behaviour; one white man had been stabbed. A petrol bomb and milk bottles were thrown from roofs in Blenheim Crescent, where a crowd was surging. Mr G Rogers, MP for North Kensington, toured the area earlier in a loudspeaker van and appealed for "common sense, decency, and tolerance." At the opening of the TUC at Bournemouth yesterday, Mr Tom Driberg, chairman of the Labour party, described the racial riots as a "blot on the conscience of Britain." The weekend's disturbances led to court appearances at Nottingham and west London; at Nottingham, five persons were sent to prison, each for three months, and fined up to £30. In Wolverhampton, a vigilante group has formed to help to deter possible outbreaks of racial trouble.

It comes as a shock to hear the ugly phrase "Lynch him" on English lips in an English city. But it must be reported that these words were used not once but dozens of times yesterday afternoon in a slum street in Notting Hill. One object of this venom, a young West African student, was running for his life down Bramley Road, followed by a gang of young toughs who had set upon him, kicked him and twisted his leg before he could escape. Dashing into a greengrocer's shop, he persuaded the owner's wife to bolt the door and hid himself in a back room until the police rescued him. The incident took place 50 yards from the scenes of the worst fighting in the 'race riots' at the weekend. The result of those battles was that 17 people, three of them coloured, appeared yesterday at west London court on charges ranging from insulting behaviour and possession of offensive weapons to assaulting the police. Long before trouble broke out in Bramley Road yesterday afternoon, there had been an unhealthy mood in the streets of Notting Hill. It was not a normal Monday, for there was hardly a black-skinned person to be seen in the shops or on the pavements, although there are thought to be at least 3,000 living in the area. Housewives – Asian, Indian, African and West Indian – either did without the things they needed or found a friendly white neighbour to shop for them.

At the street corners, knots of young men could be seen gathering and occasionally being dispersed by constables. Into this ugly situation stepped an outsider who had no inkling of what was in store for him. Mr Seymour Manning is a 26 year old African student who is at present living in Derby. He had come down to the city to see friends in Notting Hill, and though he did not know it, he was under close observation from hostile eyes from the moment he stepped out of the Latimer Road underground station. In the four hours that I had been in this area he was only the third coloured person that I had seen venture out of doors. I watched him disappear up Bramley Road. A few minutes later there was an outburst of screams and jeering and I saw Mr Manning sprinting back towards the underground, his tie and blazer streaming out behind him. As his three pursuers closed in, he turned in desperation and flung himself into the doorway of a greengrocer's shop, turned, and slammed the door shut. A moment later the shopkeeper's wife, Mrs Pat Howcroft, appeared in the doorway, locked the door behind her, and faced the trio of toughs. She had two friends with her – a housewife of her own age and a boy in his teens. She kept them at bay until the police arrived a few minutes later.

Soon after the first two constables came to her rescue, a radio car arrived, and after that came full reinforcements. It was during the interim period, before it was clear that the police were on their way in force, that people on the opposite pavement called out for a lynching. I went up to one of the men, who looked to be about 25, and asked what he had against the African in the shop. "Just tell your readers that Little Rock learned us a lesson," was the reply. Another youth, who had also been calling for a lynching, said to me: "Tell them we've got a bad enough housing shortage around here without them moving in. Keep Britain white." Half an hour after he had taken refuge in the store, Mr Manning was rescued by a squad of policemen who held back the crowd and escorted him to a car. He was taken off to the home of his friends, where he was treated for bruises and shock. A boy in a red shirt watched angrily while the quarry was taken away. "I was one of the three that first got 'im," he told me. "I half twisted his leg off anyway. We'd have tore 'im apart if it hadn't been for the police."

At 8 O'clock last night the speaker of the Union Movement set up his stand in a side turning beyond Latimer Road and told a handful of children that his party deplored the recent violence but went on to tell the crowd which soon collected that the blame for the trouble must be placed on the shoulders of both the Labour and Conservative governments for allowing immigration of West Indians. His audience, whose average age could not have been much more than 15, was soon bored and rushed off down Bramley Road. The police were in the area in their hundreds, patrolling the streets or sitting uncomfortably packed into vans. They spent their time telling the children not to be "silly kids." In the streets in the area many

dark faces could be seen peering from behind net curtains – wondering, doubtlessly, whether they would receive a brick through their windows. What is needed now to damp the trouble is one or two evenings of good solid rain.

Daily Telegraph, **Race riots flare in Notting Hill Gate** Race riots flared in Britain last night. Petrol bombs and thousands of milk bottles were thrown at police in west London, after white youths taunted black immigrants with racist slogans. Rioting continued through much of the night, and this morning the streets of Notting Hill Gate are strewn with broken glass and other debris. Several people were badly hurt, and 59 people were being charged with carrying offensive weapons and other offences. The magistrate ER Guest said: "I feel that the peace should be kept in this neighbourhood which in my 13 years has never been so disgraceful." The trouble started when a gang of white youths began demonstrating outside a house occupied by black people in Blenheim Crescent. They were met by a hail of milk bottles and a petrol bomb, which exploded on the pavement. Within minutes, black men had begun a counter-attack with iron bars. Although police broke this incident up and dispersed both mobs, sporadic fighting continued, with police advising black people to stay at home. A black man and his girl friend were chased down Lancaster Road by a white mob shouting "Let's get the blacks", and in Bayswater black men were ambushed as they left a club in Ledbury Road. Three petrol bombs were thrown. Special Branch officers were investigating the possibility of extreme right-wing inspiration behind the rioting.

Meanwhile, outside London, a television cameraman in Nottingham is being accused of starting a riot when a reconstruction got out of hand, and five men were imprisoned after disturbances in the St Ann's Well Road area where white and black communities clashed. As four policemen carried one screaming woman defendant from the court, the magistrate Arthur Towney said: "Lawlessness is not going to be tolerated in this city." The black population had nothing to do with the case, he added. The television cameraman had contributed to the rioting, it was said, by attempting to reconstruct a previous fight between two parties of youths. After he had lit a magnesium flare, "the mock fight, presumably staged for the benefit of the cameraman, developed into something more serious," said the prosecuting counsel. Press and television reporters were told to consider carefully to what extent they had contributed to the riots.

The Times, September 3: In one street where some of the ugliest fighting has taken place your correspondent found a group of men in a public house singing 'Old Man River' and 'Bye Bye Blackbird' and punctuating the songs with vicious anti-negro slogans. The men said that their motto was 'Keep Britain White', and they made all sorts of wild charges against their coloured neighbours. Incidentally, they were very bitter against the Labour Party for 'letting them in'... Your correspondent frequently saw white and coloured children playing together. Just after a violent incident in which a coloured man was chased down the street by white youths shouting racial slogans, he saw a white man deliberately cross the street to shake hands with a coloured fruit vendor who was terrified.

Kensington News, Friday September 5, **Race Riots Mount in Fury** The mounting internal tension in battle-torn North Kensington in these past few days has never been paralleled in its history. For several days and nights the rising numbers of arrests point to the seriousness and complications of the problem of the white man living in such uneasy proximity to the black...

Witness to Violence special 'on the spot' report by Colin Eales: On Monday evening at 7.30 outside Ladbroke Grove station, all was quiet and it was nigh-on impossible to think that this was the same area where, less than 24 hours earlier, police had arrested 17 people in street fights and beatings, West Indians had been savagely assaulted and petrol bombs had been thrown by the mobs into the homes of coloured people. But this was the main road and it was only 7.30.

Mob of 700 – Walking down Lancaster Road, people looked unconcerned and oblivious to the seething pot that was Notting Dale. Further down the street towards Bramley Road, groups began to form and head for Latimer Road station. Shouting was coming from a few blocks away. As I turned into Bramley Road I saw a mob of over 700 men, women and children stretching 200 yards along the road. Young children of ten were treating the whole affair as a great joke and shouting: "Come on, let's get the blacks and the coppers, let's get on with it."

Kill the Niggers – In the middle of a mob of screaming, jeering youths and adults, a speaker from the Union Movement was urging his excited audience to "get rid of them" (the coloured people). Groups of policemen stood at strategic points carefully watching the 'meeting', while police cars and Black Marias waited round the corner. Suddenly, hundreds of leaflets were thrown over the crowd, a fierce cry rent the air and the mob rushed off in the direction of Latimer Road shouting "Kill the niggers!" Women grabbed their small children and chased after their menfolk. Dogs ran in among the crowds barking. Everywhere

there was riotous confusion. Police cars and vans wheeled out to cut off the mob. Meanwhile other police cars and vans in the area stood by to deal with the impending wave of violence.

Women Laughed – Within half an hour the mob which had by now swelled to uncontrollable numbers had broken scores of windows and set upon two negroes who were lucky to escape with cuts and bruises. Women from the top floor windows laughed as they called down to the thousand strong crowd “Go on boys, get yourself some blacks.” As the crowd swung around into Blenheim Crescent milk bottles rained down from tenement roofs where coloured men were sheltering. Accompanied by a dozen bottles, down came a petrol-bomb in the middle of the mob. One 18 year old youth was led away with blood streaming from a head wound. Unable to get at their attackers, the inflamed rioters moved off to vent their wrath on other coloured men.

Whilst the mob was active in another street, a young boy of 5 was dragged off his bicycle in Westbourne Park Road, and beaten up by coloured men. The news spread like wildfire through the streets until it reached the ears of the rioters. Screaming for revenge they broke off from their window smashing. The mob was now moving towards Ladbroke Grove. Cars and lorries were halted as the inflamed rioters poured across the main road into Westbourne Park Road. One youth at the head of the mob ran straight into a passing car in his enthusiasm for window smashing and blood. He was taken to hospital with a suspected broken leg.

Broken Glass and Bricks – Once in Westbourne Park Road the rioters, hundreds strong, swore and shouted at a house where West Indians lived. Scores of milk bottles were hurled through the air, smashing the windows where coloured men had appeared. Broken glass and bricks were strewn across the road. Alright Boys We’re Here – The rioters left to continue their rampage through the streets. Apart from the mob itself, smaller groups of 15 to 20 were moving round the district independently. All through the evening, gangs of hooligans from all over London came to join in. They came on foot, by train, bus, motorbike, car and lorry, shouting “Alright boys, we’re here.” Those on motorbikes and in cars toured the district looking for coloured people. When they found them they went back to tell their friends. In this way I saw many coloured people suddenly pounced upon.

In St Mark’s Road a group of 14 youths picked bottles and bricks from a piece of waste ground. For a while they urged the coloured owner of a hairdresser’s shop to come out. When their patience was exhausted they smashed two windows of the upstairs flat and the plate-glass shop-front. Talbot Grove Scene – Stopping in Talbot Grove I talked to a group of cheerful housewives and their husbands. I was told that they were expecting a gang of negroes led by a female brothel-keeper to come down and set on them. As we chatted amicably on the doorstep a woman shouted “Here comes Madame!” Men and women alike pulled out railings and iron bars. Some grabbed milk bottles. A solitary coloured man ran down the street being pelted with bottles. When the excitement had subsided one woman breathed a sigh of relief and said “Wrong ones.”

Flying Milk Bottles – Further up Talbot Grove a group of youths leaned against a wall watching the windows of a house. A coloured man was peeping from behind the curtains. The next thing I saw was a dozen milk bottles sweeping through the air towards the house. There was a crash and the tinkling of glass. The house was minus three windows. Within seconds a police van was on the scene and police were all over the street. The window smashers? The birds had flown. Going to investigate the cause of shouting coming from Cornwall Crescent I saw a crowd of sightseers gathered round two police vans and three patrol cars. The police had stopped a large car. In the back were no less than a dozen youths armed with iron bars, a starting handle, and a horse-hair whip. They were put up against nearby railings and searched for further weapons. They were not arrested.

Innocent Blacks – By now some of the white people were beginning to realise that the situation was getting out of hand. Their ardour was being dampened by the indiscriminate vandalism and merciless attacks which were being inflicted on coloured people and their properties by hooligans who were only out to cause trouble. “In too many cases innocent blacks are getting beaten when it’s the rotten ones that’s still running about,” said one man in Talbot Road (Grove). Damaged Camera – There were big scenes outside the Public Baths in Silchester Road, where four other streets converge. In the middle of it the *Kensington News* photographer that accompanied me was shoved in the back and told “Don’t take too many pictures.” And with that remark a lout kicked out at his £120 camera, seriously damaging it.

Over to Shepherd’s Bush – At 3am on Tuesday morning gangs were still touring the district smashing in any remaining windows. A few hours earlier the situation had cooled slightly when the mob went over to Shepherd’s Bush where there were less police and newsmen. They weren’t expecting racial violence in that area so the coloured folk thought they could walk about unmolested. They wondered what hit them

when the mob arrived. Throughout the whole evening the police were on their toes after the weekend debacle. Extra police and motorised units were drafted in from outlying districts. Black Marias and covered lorries crammed with policemen patrolled the area constantly, stopping at any sign of trouble.

Magistrate Appeals for Curfew – 26 in Court 26 people appeared before Mr ER Guest at West London on Tuesday in connection with the race riots in Blenheim Crescent W11, and Lancaster Road, on Monday and Tuesday. They faced various charges of insulting and threatening behaviour and some of being in possession of offensive weapons.

Mr ER Guest said he “had hoped that by now some spiritual, industrial or political leader of great influence in the neighbourhood would have had an opportunity of saying something in order to assist in the restoration of decent life there. As they had not had the opportunity it might be useful – although he had no such influence – if he said that now was the time for people of goodwill in the area, for a day or two, to stay indoors from the early evening to let the police restore order and above all to keep their people in for an evening or two, then they would be able to see the streets cleared again and if trouble was caused it would not be by residents in Notting Hill.”

The Accused – The accused were Alan Richter, 18, labourer, Cornwall Crescent W11, and Derek Frank Mason, 17, van boy, no fixed abode (insulting behaviour, Ladbroke Road (*Grove?*), September 1); Rosa Gordon, 28, factory hand, Westbourne Park Road (using insulting words, Blenheim Crescent, September 2); David Cracknell, 19, Seymour King Buildings, Kenley Street W11 (threatening behaviour, Lancaster Road, and having with him an offensive weapon – a knife); Thomas Frederick Tamplin, 17, wood chopper, Latimer Road (insulting behaviour, Ladbroke Grove, September 1); John Edward Cox, 17, labourer, North End Road (insulting behaviour, Lancaster Road, and having in his possession an offensive weapon – a leather belt); Frank Baker, 50, street salesman, Blenheim Crescent (insulting behaviour, Blenheim Crescent); Denton Boyd, 49, carpenter, Rochfort Gardens W12 (having offensive weapons – hatchet and open razor, Blenheim Crescent); John Osborn(e), 24, assistant café manager, Harrow Road W2 (having an offensive weapon – a carving knife, Blenheim Crescent, September 1);

Allie (Ali) Kamara, 29, no occupation, Colville Terrace W11 (having an offensive weapon – sheath knife, Kensington Park Road, September 1); Kenneth Morris, 23, shunter, Ladbroke Grove (having an offensive weapon – butcher’s knife, Talbot Road W11, September 1); Joseph Williams, 36, labourer, Faraday Road W11 (having offensive weapon – a flick knife, Portobello Road, September 1); Brian Greenham, 18, Binns Road, Chiswick (having an offensive weapon – weighted leather belt, Norland Road W11); Darryl Raphal, 23, no occupation, Monmouth Road W2 (having offensive weapon – a length of cycle chain, Blenheim Crescent, September 1); Anthony Hill, 20, aircraftsman, RAF Uxbridge (having offensive weapon – open razor, Kensington Park Road, September 1); Christopher Robert Tofts, 20, greengrocer, St Ann’s Road W10, and Christopher James Hopkins, 23, foreman ganger, Star Road, Reading (insulting behaviour and obstructing police); Harry Lancaster, 47, lorry driver, Talbot Grove, Notting Hill (threatening behaviour); Peter Edward Bell, 21, factory hand, Talbot Grove (insulting behaviour);

John Ives, 18, improver, of Princedale Road, Notting Hill; Linvell Myers, 26, Murchison Road, North Kensington; Dennis Roy Tofts, 22, Bramley Road W10 (wilfully obstructing PC J Williams, Bramley Road, September 1); Hubert Baker, 32, cook (*Baron?*), Blenheim Crescent (threatening behaviour, Blenheim Crescent, September 1); Clive Johnson, 28, barman, Earl’s Court Road (having an offensive weapon – woodchopper, Walham Road, September 2); George Headley, 25, seaman, no fixed abode (having offensive weapon – large piece of wood, Kensington Park Road, September 1); Goulborn Downs, 35, no occupation, Talbot Road W11 (having offensive weapon – carving knife, Talbot Road, September 1) and Hubert Richard Harper, 27, labourer, St Ann’s Road W11 (insulting behaviour, Bramley Road, August 31) (*no Michael de Freitas – unless he gave a false name*).

In the case against Rosa Gordon a police officer said that he went to Blenheim Crescent where there was a disturbance. Gordon was with a number of coloured people who were shouting and swearing at passers by. When arrested she said she never tried to fight. She was fined £3. “A Pack of Lies – Cracknell was said by the police to have jostled people in Lancaster Road. A policeman saw a flash of metal in his hand. Cracknell: “He is telling a pack of lies.” Mr Guest said it would be contrary to the public interest to grant Cracknell bail. In the case against John Edward Cox, Police Inspector V Coventry said that on Monday night in Lancaster Road, Cox was heard to say “Come on, let’s do the . . . (*not the bop*)” Mr Guest said Cox would be remanded to September 9 to Tower Bridge Court in his own recognisance of £10 or one surety of £10.

Boyd was remanded in custody until September 9. He was stated to have been with a crowd of coloured men who were openly displaying weapons and shouting threats. Boyd had a chopper in his hand, and

shouted "Come out and fight." Mr Guest said that as Boyd was alleged to have been carrying a razor it would not be in the public interest to grant bail. He made the same decision in the case of John Osborne who was alleged to have had a knife in his hand when arrested.

Chopper Concealed by Magazine – Bail was also refused to Clive Johnson. PC R O'Neill said that early that morning Johnson was driving a greengrocers van along Walmer Road and had a chopper in his hand concealed by a magazine. Mr Guest also remanded in custody Goulborn Downs in view of what he was carrying when arrested. Had Sheath Knife – Bail was also refused to Allie Kamara who was accused of having a sheath knife in his right hand when arrested, and to Kenneth Morris who was said to have had a knife in his hand. Joseph Williams was also remanded in custody. A police constable said that Williams had an open knife in his hand when he was arrested.

Brian Greenham was granted bail on one surety of £10. Belt Studded with Bolts – A police officer said Greenham had a leather belt studded with bolts round his neck. He said he was looking for someone who had "done up" one of his mates. Mr Guest declined to grant bail to Darryl Raphal accused of having a broken bicycle chain in his possession. Raphal said he was having the chain repaired. Mr Guest said that in this area at this particular time a man of goodwill would not carry a bicycle chain in his pocket. Arthur Hill was like wise remanded in custody, PC T Ferguson stating that Hill was arrested with a razor in his right hand. There was a crowd of coloured people in Blenheim Crescent shouting and screaming, and the witness saw iron bars, razors and knives. The other defendants were granted bail and (with the exception of Rosa Gordon) remanded to Tower Bridge Magistrates Court on September 9.

Kensington News, Friday September 12, **It Must Never Happen Again – Borough Unites in War on Violence – The Man with a Chopper – Police Evidence of Terror Night** A coloured man armed with a chopper was said by a detective to be walking through the street at Notting Hill shouting out to white people "Come out and fight." "He was endeavouring to hide the chopper under his coat and I took it from him and also found a razor in his hip pocket," said the witness, Det. Constable J Murray. This evidence was given at Tower Bridge Court on Tuesday when eleven men – three white and eight coloured – were charged with fighting and causing an affray at Blenheim Crescent and other streets on the nights of September 1 and 2. The men appeared on remand. The charges arose out of racial fighting in Notting Hill.

The men were: Ali Kamara, 29, coloured, of Colville Terrace, Notting Hill; Darryl Raphal, 23, coloured, Monmouth Road, Bayswater; Aircraftman Anthony Hill, 23, coloured, RAF Uxbridge; George H(e)adley, coloured, seaman of no settled address; Denton Boyd, 49, coloured, carpenter; John Osborne, 24, coloured, Harrow Road, Paddington; John Edward Cox, 17, labourer, North End Road, Fulham; Thomas Frederick Tamplin, 17, Latimer Road, Notting Hill; Kenneth Morris, 23, coloured, Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill; and Goulborn Downs, 35, coloured, Talbot Road, Paddington.

Tamplin was discharged on the affray account and the remaining ten were sent for trial. All pleaded not guilty. Raphal, Hill, Hadley, Cox and Cracknell were allowed bail. PC Brown said he saw Raphal among a gang of 30 coloured men carrying knives and lumps of wood. "I found in his pocket a broken length of bicycle chain," said the witness. PC Ferguson said he saw a group of coloured men blocking the footway and shouting. Hill put a closed razor in his pocket and told him: "I carry it for my protection."

PC Copley said Osborne was one of a crowd of coloured people shouting and yelling in Blenheim Crescent on September 1. During a chase Osborne, who had a knife in his hand stopped and pointed it at him, saying: "Get back." He then ran off, and when stopped was still carrying the knife. Inspector Vincent Coventry said he saw Cox at the head of a large crowd of white people on Lancaster Road. The crowd were shouting: "Come on, let's clear these . . . out" and moving down the road. Cox stood in the roadway waving a belt and shouted: "Come on, let's do the . . ." **Mosley Meeting Booked – A meeting to be addressed by Sir Oswald Mosley has been booked by Euphorium Publications for Kensington Town Hall on October 7. The date was booked three months ago.**

Kensington News, Friday September 26 1958, **Gaming House in Café Yard – Police Raid Dice Party** A 19 year old girl was at West London on Friday fined £25 and ordered to pay £10 10s. costs after police officers had described a raid on an outhouse in the back yard of a Notting Hill café where coloured men were gambling with dice and cards. Thelma Williams, a factory hand, of St Ann's Road, Notting Hill, was convicted of having the care of a common gaming house at premises in Blenheim Crescent, Notting Hill.

Together with nine coloured men, the girl was also bound over not to frequent gaming houses for a year on a charge of being found on premises alleged to be a common gaming house. PC Leslie Marshall said he saw a number of coloured men go out through the café kitchen door into an outhouse in the yard where they began to play dice round a table. Later there were 20 coloured men present and a pack of cards was

produced. The coloured girl paid several visits to the outhouse. There was a sudden crash of glass and several of the men ran out and climbed over a wall.

Door Forced – PC Alan Grant, who took part in the police raid, said he had to force the café door. He overtook the girl who was shouting in agitated tones. He then forced the kitchen door to get into the yard. He found 10 coloured men in the outhouse in which there was a table covered with a grey blanket. He found a black dice. Chief Supt. Frederick Fieldsend said the girl told him: “No one is in charge of the premises. I just look after them for my brother.” Told the police were satisfied she was responsible for allowing gaming, the girl replied: “I know it goes on. I told them the law would come sooner or later.”

Pleading not guilty, the girl denied knowing gaming was taking place in the outhouse. She added that it was her brother's café (*Joseph Williams – Totobag??*) and on this evening he had gone out for a short time. Mr RG Mays, prosecuting, described the premises as being “of bad repute.” He added that the gaming was on a fair scale because the 10 arrested coloured men had nearly £140 between them when arrested. One man had £95 of it which suggested he had either done very well or had been the banker.

Nine Arrests – The nine coloured men who admitted being frequenters were: Charles Edghill, 23, of Tunstall Road, Brixton; George Webb, 31, labourer, of Bramley Road, Notting Hill; Nathan Rainford, 23, labourer, of Moorhouse Road, Notting Hill; Wilburt Campbell, 27, disc jockey, of Silchester Road, Notting Hill; Nicholas McKoy, 31, painter, of Franconia Road, Clapham; Vincent Brown, 28, unemployed, of Westbourne Park Road, Notting Hill; Eric Bernard Dawson, 29, carpenter, of Bramley Road, Notting Hill; Francis Johnson, 23, waiter, of Tavistock Road, Paddington; Frederick Mowatt, barber, of Rochester Road, Camden Town; Lewis Jones, 22, unemployed, of St Ann's Road, Notting Hill, did not appear.

Tony Benn, diary extract from *The Gaitskell Years 1955-60*: August Race rioting in Nottingham and Notting Hill at the end of the month loomed suddenly and unexpectedly on the scene... Monday September 1 For the second night running last night the race riots went on in Notting Hill. A very ugly situation is developing. I drove through the streets this evening and it was extremely sinister to see everyone standing out in front of their doors in the hot sultry air just waiting for something to happen. The crowds of young people gathering on street corners indicated the outbreak of some new attack.

Tuesday September 2 The trouble continued on an even bigger scale last night. I toured the area before breakfast and saw the debris and the corrugated iron up behind the windows of the prefabs where the coloured families live. The use of petrol bombs and iron bars and razors is appalling. There is a large area where it is not safe for people to be out. I saw Chief Inspector Simmonds at Notting Hill police station for a short talk. He is confident that the police can handle it. This afternoon I toured the area again by car and even at 5 O'clock there was an ugly atmosphere and people hurried along the streets. The Labour party really must say something about this.

Wednesday September 3 Saw Gaitskell this morning and we had two hours discussing party political broadcasts... I urged a party broadcast on the race riots and that he should visit the area personally. He said he couldn't tour without Butler's permission and later said that he was advised that it was unsafe. I came away very dejected. What is wrong with the party is that it is inactive. We ought to be offering a constructive daily alternative on a wide range of issues. We are just not doing it.

Kensington News, May 29 1959, following the racist murder of Kelso Cochrane on Southam Street in Kensal on May 16/17: For once, in this overcrowded area, you can hear the steady reassuring gait of patrolling policemen – always two together. I walked in the gathering dusk of Tuesday evening into the troubled area via Portobello Road. The nearer I got to Golborne Road – where it happened on Whit Sunday – the more I became aware of the emptied streets and an atmosphere made more tense by people watching the streets below from open windows, or, more cautiously, from behind curtains. Near the top end of Golborne Road, a white man in shirt sleeves bent over his motorcycle. He dropped a spanner on the pavement; the noise it made was almost hideous on this night.

On the other side of the road a hoarding advertisement (out-dated) announced: 'Mosley is coming to Trafalgar Square.' The Union Movement's leader's picture was daubed with bright red paint. A police car nosed its way into the Portobello Road from a side street. The blue capped occupants looked me over and drove on into the night. Two West Indian men passed me in utter silence. In Kensal Road, with its long line of humble terraced houses, I heard the staccato clip-clop of high heels. A teenage girl ran across the road to a shop, bought some cigarettes and fled back to the house she had left. Outside a pub in Ladbrooke Grove a group of four or five youths, hands stuck in trouser pockets, just stood and stared. On a corner opposite them two policemen kept a wary eye on the group. The boys remained silent, hardly moving. Back at Notting Hill Gate the neon lights and the busy traffic were never more welcome after the deathly hush of North Kensington.

The *Kensington News* and *The Times* reported on the White Defence League rally in Trafalgar Square on May 25, the Sunday after the Kelso Cochrane murder, being disrupted by protestors chanting 'Sieg Heil', 'No Colour Bar in Britain', and 'Who killed Kelso Cochrane?'

'Southam Street' by Gavin Selerie, 1986-91: Presley is mad/I love Elvis/Elvis is/D Cox/A Pelvis/JW/The King/The Pox/Sandra Mills is/Elvis you are the one/Yvonne I love you/I'm blue today, scratched and proud the iron bridge by the Earl of Warwick speaks mean its railway dreams, black and white fifties instant of winter, a sheet of glamour and chores contacting into a chunky casbah, the Ted who turns, suddenly operatic, his long jacket and mirror shoes an invitation to be on, the blonde eight year old perched on the handlebar who rides a tricycle backwards, the four women linking arms who gaze beneath scarf and grips with a hard, still generous alertness, the Brylcreem boy who measures an adult's wheel against a child's bike while his sister holds a toddler in the saddle, the goalposts drawn on the wall to catch shadows, the casual walking and talking that is foregrounded by braces of assertion.

In this more than a museum my eyes seem to tread, of frills dispersed by a locomotive in the spine, the final business a boot repairer at number 92, a game of poker on the steps, spiv and spade parings hot after ferreting, a neighbourhood job, what you done then, the groceries can wait – Mae shuffles in slippers as the Wolseley arrives, a tremor from the tracks to the canal, closed basements of rheumatism and consumption, bottle glass scattered like diamonds in the asphalt, a black terrier limps toward a shock of children, the girls in short socks swinging from a street lamp or pressed in a handstand against corrugated sheets while the boys shout "Ropem and Chokem" or "Catch a falling sputnik": games in the chalk circle and waiting for thruppence an infectious soccer urgency between the peeling terraces of another century, the gas works at the north end and the glistening kerbstone edge aligning each event.

Class War/Mandy I love you/If voting made any difference they'd abolish it/Boy is a junkie/America the great devil/Go home you sod/Sniff le sex test/This is not a love song/Elvis Costello no's it/Colour by numbers, with a long diesel choke the Repulse heads out beyond Portobello Junction aching for tunnels and the west, "Southam Street" says the red-faced gorger outside the Earl (differing from the librarian's "Suthem"), yes it used to run one long street from the bottom there up to the bend into Southern Row, and this was the middle, the bridge, railway houses, they was originally, backed up against the railway with railway people living there I think, more deaths than anywhere, it was poky but I tell you it was a community, now there's just these fifty yards, the Council moved everything down when they did their new town scheme, I'm not complaining, mind, I've got my own place – one family one place that's what you get with the modern.

You could buy a pennyworth of pickles from the corner shop – that would be a little on top or it would keep you going, Saturday night was the big blow-out when the fellas used to come home rollin' and singing, hair was on the ground and blood but you was mates again afterwards, Black Harry: the kids would wait to touch him when he came out because they thought he was lucky, you didn't have a bath, there might just be a gas ring on the landing, but there was grapes and fruit carved at the sides of the fireplaces, you never had nothing but you had everything because you had your friends, you had the streets because there were none of them comforts inside, no television, you grew a character of your own. A photograph of the Robin Hood and Little John, October 1967 – a bulky round-cornered pub at the south-eastern end by

the junction with Kensal Road, its stately windows agape, doors boarded, a broken Victorian, the name and brewery erased even before demolition, the road designated 'Play Street'.

Pregnancies, washing and the DHSS: Trellick Tower, with thirty floors, stands up a concrete giant, a nucleated village or druid inferno, the lift section, with ten bridges, four funnels and slits like a castle, is called 'The Psychiatric Wing' because when the lifts break down you don't want to come out, the best view of London, she said, a man spits with vehemence, a boy drags a scaffolding pole into the sunken playground which already boats a log frame, swings and fixed red bars, the breeze block walls are a honeycomb blacked in fifteen years, 'Billy Butler' painted cheerfully in white, a reassertion as the pigeons swoop from neat boxes and polychrome panels to gut stale loaves stuffed into a lorry-size refuse drum.

Space there is and colour and tolerable health marked by what persists in parallel: J. Wilmot (Curtain Makers), Southern Row, four fireplaces on an outside wall like Moloch's eyes, a passage to the Grove with steps, railings and two metal posts, 'KP 1867' set into the brickwork, 'Ancient Lights' on the cellar door. I am a street/survivals and mutations baby-ridden and eager, I am a plot on soapsuds island – market of the land, I am a pocket of laughter while the smokes go round, I am the skirt who walks out at night mutely trailing my drainpipe lad, I am the tinderbox, black hair streaked with silver, has you twist to the tone of a pink bakerlite radio unexpectedly cruising as keys, the keys are thrown down.