

COLLECTION LEVEL

Ref no	GB3228.33
Collection name	Papers of Beresford Edwards -v- Society of Graphical and Allied Trades
Date of donation or creation	2012
Donor name	Mrs Edwards
Collection type	Donated Collection: Complete (fonds)
Date range	1965-1970
Form	Hybrid
Extent	3 Boxes
Creator	Beresford Edwards
Archival history	Donated by Mrs Edwards
Administrative history	<p>Beresford Edwards, who has died in his native Guyana aged 72, was a man of huge and always optimistic importance to Britain's African-Caribbean community, especially in Manchester, which became his home.</p> <p>Known variously as Baba Berry, Chief Nana Bonsu (the honorary title conferred on him by African Mancunians) or Courthouse Edwards, because of his inveterate backing for young black men caught up in harassment or street violence, he was an inspirational role model in hard times.</p> <p>He won national attention within a decade of moving to Britain in 1961, when he found work as a printer in Manchester and became a shop steward for the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades. In an episode tainted with racism, he was expelled from the union in 1969 for alleged non-payment of dues, consequently losing his job in a closed shop. The case went to the high court in London, where Lord Denning denounced SOGAT, ordered £7,971 compensation and concluded his judgment with the dictum: "A man's right to work is now fully recognised by the law."</p> <p>Edwards changed course after the case and became a youth worker, a career where the self-confidence instilled by his legal battle added to his existing skills in friendly dealings with the young. He had a cupboard-full of medals from his own teenage days, when he represented Guyana in the discus and shot-put in inter-Caribbean competitions.</p> <p>He was born in Guyana and educated in Georgetown, where he was a chorister at St George's cathedral. Like many of their compatriots, he and his wife Elouise wanted to see more of the world, and they settled in Manchester's Moss Side where a thriving African-Caribbean community had developed by the early 1960s.</p>
Administrative history cont...	<p>Berry became chairman of the Guyanese Association and then warden of the West Indian Community Centre in Longsight, the focus of countless campaigns and cultural events. Keen to learn all his life, he took a Manchester Polytechnic certificate in youth and community work and strongly encouraged others to study.</p> <p>His intellectual mentors were Bernard Coard, Ron Phillips and Marcus Garvey, whom he had met as a child in Guyana and who inspired his belief in the importance of African-Caribbean cultural identity. Berry's community work had a permanently campaigning element; he was secretary of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, which played an important part in achieving the 1976 Race Relations Act, and also founded the Manchester branch of the Pan-African Congress Movement.</p> <p>The practical side of these initiatives particularly appealed to him, and he set up a bookshop specialising in African-Caribbean history and culture. He also organised the country's first Saturday schools, designed to give black children pride in their background. Culture Week, the forerunner to the current Black History Month, owed much to him and he also worked with local colleges to set up courses in motor vehicle engineering and TV and radio repairs.</p> <p>These initiatives earned him respect, and not just from the African-Caribbean young. When he turned up day after day in his role as Courthouse Edwards, the magistrates and employment tribunals knew that they were dealing with a practical, down-to-earth man rather than a blusterer or demagogue.</p> <p>Berry enjoyed lecturing on the lessons he had learned from his work in Manchester. He spoke to enthusiastic audiences in Egypt, Israel, Burkina Faso, Ghana and throughout the Americas. His one unrealised dream was to create a full-blown community school for African Caribbeans in Manchester as a prototype for similar initiatives across the country.</p> <p>Edwards set another example to the young by working hand-in-hand with Elouise, who was awarded the MBE and an honorary MA from Manchester University for her work in the city's African-Caribbean community. He leaves her and their four sons, 13 grandchildren and a great grandchild.</p> <p>· Beresford Edwards, youth and community worker, born June 25 1930; died March 15 2003 (The Guardian; Vincent Wilkinson and Martin Wainwright: 3 April 2003)</p>
Scope and content	<p>In 1967 Beresford Edwards challenged the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) union decision to dismiss him and won the case. While working at a printing firm in 1967, Edwards was a temporary member of SOGAT. The Union had a system whereby the employers deduct the employee's Union contribution from his pay, but despite his written instruction, this was not done in Edwards' case and he fell into arrears with his subscriptions for six weeks.</p> <p>According to the rule of the union, any temporary member in arrears automatically lost his/her membership. Consequently he lost his union card and since it was a 'closed shop' he automatically lost his job.</p> <p>Edwards decided to take the Union to court and claim for damages and won. The case went to the High Court in London, where Lord Denning denounced SOGAT, ordering £7,971 compensation to be paid to Edwards. Lord Denning in concluding his ruling said: "No trade union can give itself by its rule an unfettered discretion to expel a man or withdraw his membership; A man's right to work is now fully recognized by the law".</p> <p>Lord Denning (Alfred Denning, 1899 – 1999) was "Master of the Rolls, who headed the civil side of the Court of Appeal for 20 years was the most influential post in administering English law.</p> <p>Edward's case marked the first major blow to Trade Union closed shop operations in the England, some twenty two years after the United States ended this practice in 1947. All forms of closed shop practices in the UK ended in the UK with the introduction of the Employment Act 1990.</p> <p>This archive is a collection of the legal papers, correspondence, newspaper clippings and related documents relating to the case.</p>
System of arrangement	<p>The collection is organised into the following series:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Court documents dated 1968 2. Court documents dated 1969 3. Court documents dated 1970 4. Court documents bundle 5. Submitted court forms and legal aid certificates 6. Draft Affidavits 7. Solicitor's correspondence 8. B.G.Lithographic Co.,LTD. correspondence 9. Boxmakers (Manchester) Limited correspondence 10. Trade Union Congress correspondence 11. Bowater-Stevenson Containers Limited correspondence 12. Department of Employment and Productivity correspondence and photocopies of newspaper clippings 13. Correspondence from the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers and S.O.G.A.T 14. Original documents, photographs and letters 15. Scrapbook
Related material	Nana Bonsu Oral History Project
Access conditions	Open
Usage and permissions	Scrapbook has been digitised due to delicate nature
Language/s	English
Finding aids	n/a
Key words	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades, S.O.G.A.T, racial discrimination, law and justice

SERIES LEVEL

Ref no	Series name	Date range	Form	Extent	Material spec (digital)	Creator	Background	Scope and content	Detail	Related material	Access conditions	Usage and permissions	Language/s	Finding aids	Key words
GB3228.33/01	Court documents dated 1968	1968	Physical original	20 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; Society of Graphical and Allied Trades		A range of court documents dating from 1968		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/02	Court documents dated 1969	1969	Physical original	14 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; Society of Graphical and Allied Trades		A range of court documents dating from 1969 including 3 bound evidence books and 1 bound judgement book		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/03	Court documents dated 1970	1970	Physical original	3 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; Society of Graphical and Allied Trades		A range of court documents dating from 1970		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/04	Court documents bundle	n.d.	Physical original	50 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; Society of Graphical and Allied Trades		A court bundle kept in original presentation form		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/05	Submitted court forms and legal aid certificates	1968-1970	Physical original	16 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards		Various Court forms submitted including a Specially Indorsed Writ, List of Documents, and Notice to Proceed. Legal aid certificates included		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/06	Draft Affidavits	1968-1970	Physical original	25 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; George Dykes; James Broom; Frank Price; Angus John Bateman; Eric Mason; Joseph Graham; Brian Jones		Draft Affidavits of the following people: Beresford Edwards; George Dykes; James Broom; Frank Price; Angus John Bateman; Eric Mason; Joseph Graham; Brian Jones		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/07	Solicitor's correspondence	1967-1970	Physical original	115 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; Lawford & Co.; Messrs.W.H.Thompson		Solicitors Correspondence between Beresford Edwards, Lawford & Co. and Messrs.W.H.Thompson		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/08	B.G.Lithographic Co.,LTD. correspondence	1960	Physical original	4 items	n/a	B.G.Lithographic Co.,LTD.		Correspondence from B.G.Lithographic Co.,LTD, Beresford Edwards' previous employers		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/09	Boxmakers (Manchester) Limited correspondence	1969	Physical original	3 items	n/a	Boxmakers (Manchester) Limited		Correspondence from Boxmakers (Manchester) Limited, Beresford Edwards' previous employers		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/10	Trade Union Congress correspondence	1966	Physical original	2 items	n/a	Trade Union Congress		Letters regarding racial discrimination		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/11	Bowater-Stevenson Containers Limited correspondence	1969-1970	Physical original	7 items	n/a	Bowater-Stevenson Containers Limited		Correspondence from Bowater-Stevenson Containers Limited, Beresford Edwards' previous employers		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/12	Department of Employment and Productivity correspondence and photocopies of newspaper clippings	1969	Mixed physical	4 items	n/a	Department of Employment and Productivity		Department of Employment and Productivity correspondence and photocopies of a newspaper clipping regarding the case		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/13	Correspondence from the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers and S.O.G.A.T	1965-1968	Physical original	34 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards; National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paper Workers; S.O.G.A.T		Correspondence regarding the Union card		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/14	Original documents, photographs and letters	Various	Physical original	30 items	n/a	Beresford Edwards		Various items including Printers Union card and a number of contribution cards		n/a	Open		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards
GB3228.33/15	Scrapbook	Various	Physical original	1 item, digital file	Yes	Beresford Edwards		Contains various news cuttings, photographs and letters. Has been digitised for access.		n/a	Closed - Due to delicate nature of the Scrapbook		English	n/a	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades; Racial Discrimination; Beresford Edwards