

# PRESS RELEASE

# BLUE HERITAGE PLAQUE

**Peter Abrahams**

**Author and Journalist**

**37 Jessel Drive, Loughton IG10 2EX**



Loughton Town Council has installed a plaque at 37 Jessel Green in recognition of Peter Abrahams, the South African journalist and ‘freedom’ writer, as part of its blue heritage plaque scheme, which aims to raise awareness of Loughton’s rich history.

Peter Abrahams was born in 1919, in Vrededorp, a suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa.  He was a writer whose journalism and novels explored, with sensitivity and passion, the injustices of apartheid and the complexities of racial politics.  Mine Boy (published: 1946) and his memoir Tell Freedom (published: 1954) dealt in part with apartheid. A Wreath for Udomo (1956) is a none-too hopeful look at the African independence that was then forthcoming.

In 1939 he left South Africa and worked first as a sailor, then as a journalist in London.  While working in London, he lived latterly with his wife, Daphne, in Loughton, where and in London he met several leading black activists and writers including George Padmore: a leading figure in the Pan-African Community; along with Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya (both of whom later became Heads of their respective nations).

Abrahams had had early hopes of becoming a writer but faced considerable challenges as a South African.  In 1942, despite a manuscript reader’s recommendation, Allen & Unwin published his Dark Testament (made up of pieces he had carried with him from South Africa).  Other works published included, in 1945: Song of the City and 1946: Mine Boy (which became the first African novel written in English to attract international attention).  More publications followed in both the UK and USA.

In 1956 he moved to Jamaica, where he settled, and was awarded the Musgrave Gold Medal for writing & journalism by the Institute of Jamaica in 1994.

Abrahams was found dead (aged 97) at his home in Jamaica in January 2017.  A forensic examination showed he had been the victim of foul play, with Norman Tomlinson, a 61 year old, local man, being charged with his murder.

End

**Note to Editor:**

Photo attached:

* Blue heritage plaque and inscription

The plaque inscription reads:

*Peter Abrahams (1919 – 2017) Author and Journalist Lived Here*

This latest plaque brings the total installed by the town council to 45.

More information can be found on the town council’s website at

<http://www.loughton-tc.gov.uk/2bhpl.htm>

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