

The Tony Cheeseman Foundation Recognition of the Contribution made by African/Caribbean or West Indian people in the East End of London.

As part of our Annual lectures the Foundation recognises significant contributions made to the community by African / Caribbean people. In 2013 we honoured Sam King MBE, in 2014 we honoured Donna Keizer in 2014 and this year 2015 we are proud to recognise the work of two East London Senior Race Relations Officers Joe Hunte from the Borough of Tower Hamlets and Eddie Warner from the Borough of Newham.

JOE HUNTE (c.1918-1983)

Joe Hunte was a community activist who fought to improve living and working conditions for West Indians in London. He was born in St Vincent then worked in Trinidad as a teacher. In 1958, he came to Britain and studied Politics, Economics and Philosophy at Swansea University, where he won the annual student debating competition. Hunte then moved to Brixton with his family. In 1968 he took up the post as Senior Community Relations Officer in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, a post he held until his retirement. Hunte became a voice for the growing West Indian community and was active in social and political issues.

After an incident with the police at Lambeth Town Hall, he published a pamphlet suggesting ways to improve relations between the police and immigrant communities. Hunte was appointed to a Home Office advisory committee dealing with race relations – the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants – and was frequently invited to talk to groups of trainee and serving police officers. Many of his ideas have become standard community police practice.

In 1977, Hunte was awarded the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal for services to the local community. After his death, Joe Hunte Court – a sheltered housing scheme in Lambeth near Knight's Hill – was named after him. There is also a memorial to him in St Vincent Close, named after the island where he was born.