

REMEMBERING BOB MARLEY:

MORE THAN JUST A HERO

To the youth of Brooklyn Corner in Trench Town, Bob Marley is much, much more than the international star who was both a musical and spiritual force to be reckoned with.

To them, he remains a uniquely personalized, local hero who nurtured their physical and spiritual beings and taught them to reap good from their environment.

And they love to talk about him and the way in which he influenced their lives.

No-one seemed to notice the heat of the early afternoon sun. The twenty or so youths who gathered one Saturday along-side the Colly Smith gully's bridge -which overlooks

Brooklyn Corner and the wall with its 10ft. by 11ft. painting of Bob Marley - were intent only on expressing their thoughts on their mentor.

They were pleased that TUFF GONG MUSIC LTD. has decided to have artist Earl Gordon re-do, in time for the 1984 Bob Marley Day Celebration, the portrait of Bob Marley which was painted on the wall to show the community's appreciation for Bob's work in Trench Town.

"When we decided to do the wall," says Dennis Jento, "somebody suggests that Marcus Garvey's picture should also be painted there. But we only wanted Bob because he was right in here with us. He operated on the local

level. And anywhere him go, him always check for ghetto people."

The younger members of the group who spoke about Bob Marley such as Mark and Alton Brown, aged 9 and 11 respectively; 15-year-old Alton Ellis; and Charmaine Bailey and Garfield Tomlinson, both 13 - remember Bob mainly for the ice-cream treats he used to put on for them at Boys Town, and for the fact that he saw to it that they were never without a football.

"And him used to come up to the Fifth (5th) Street Kitchen and give us nuff conrmeal and bulgawheat porridge; and we would sit around and play the congo drums for him while him play him guitar and sing," Chris Smith said.

The older members of the group - including Wills Johnson (16), Clinton Bailey (19), Donovan Daley (21) and Steve Ellis,

18-year-old son of singer Alton Ellis, revere Bob Marley more for the support he gave them toward both their formal and informal education.

"Bob used to show us things in his songs," Steve Ellis says. "A lot of things that the society used to hide from us, him come and show us -'cause him take time to sit and talk with us.

"But more than this, him used to help us when we have to go to school. anything we need, him would just tell Diane Jobson to get a list from us and she would get our school shoes and khaki and all that."

The feeling these youths have for Bob Marley and the love and support he gave them are represented in the combined thoughts of Dennis Jento, Jah Butta, and Steve Ellis.

"Bob was honest and

genuine to us. He gave the Brooklyn Street people a green grocery shop called SURVIVAL. And he told us he was going on a Survival tour and when he came back, he'd fix the park on 1st. Street for us. But he couldn't come back."

"He was greater to me that my own father so I call him my father. When I hear that him pass, I cry the living eyewater." (Jah Butta).

"Bob shouldn't gone you know! When we hear seh him gone me vex. Him use to make me feel immortal - and if a good man like Bob can gone, me feel like it can happen to me too.

"But Brooklyn Corner wall reminds me daily of Bob. And him live on as an inspiration in our brains. Him bring us up to realize that good can come out of here...and me no 'fraid to bawl out like Bob sing - 'me come from Trench Town'" (Ellis).