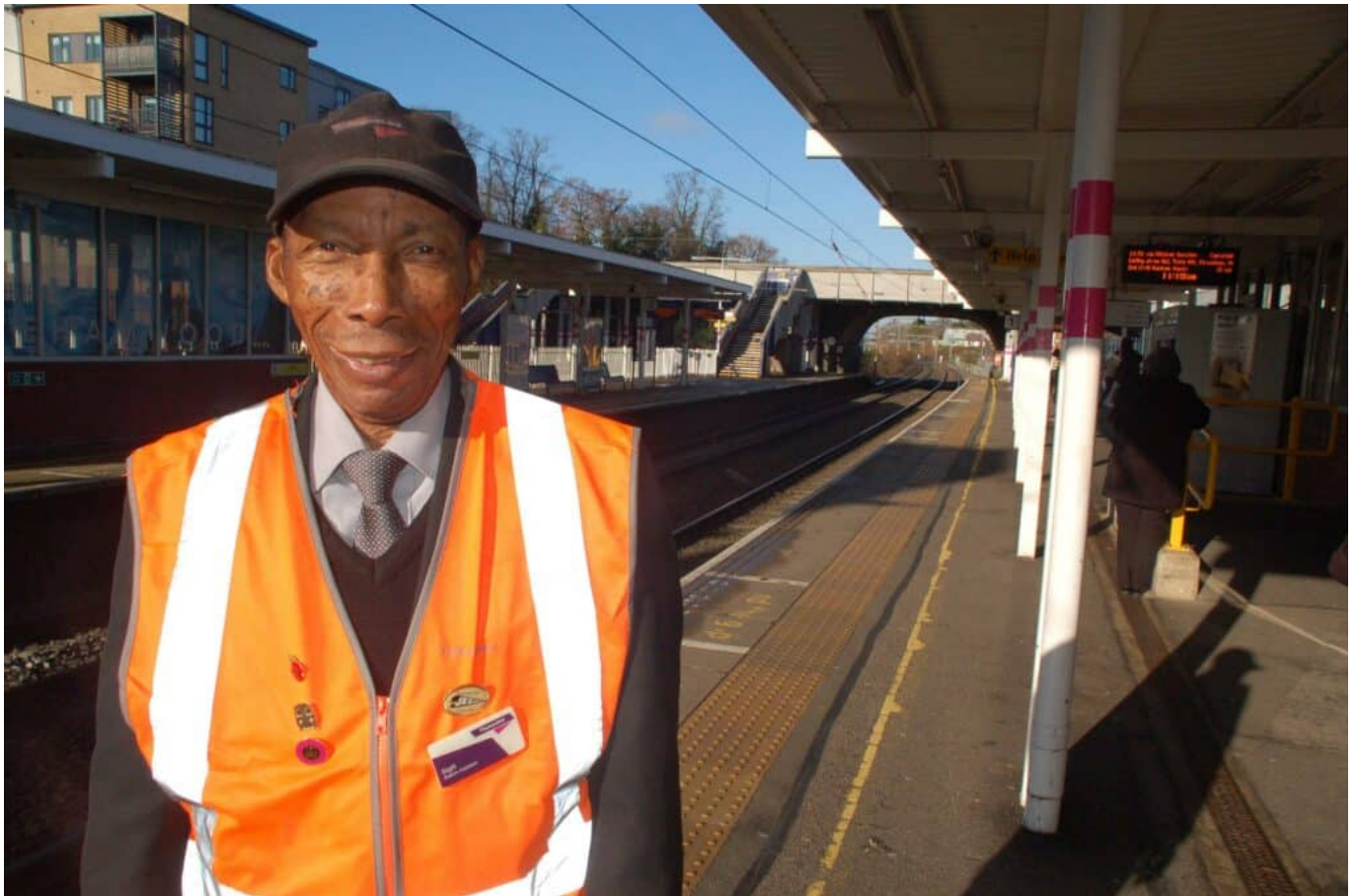


Howzat! 80 not out for Elstree & Borehamwood platform star

December 16, 2019



An Elstree & Borehamwood platform star has hit 80 not-out, as he is honoured for his international cricket career and 57 years on the railway.

Thameslink's oldest member of staff has worked on the railways for 57 years and is still playing cricket for England at the ripe old age of 80!

Siggie Cragwell gets up at 4am to do the 6-11am shift as a platform assistant at Elstree & Borehamwood station and then goes to the gym to practise Tai Chi and Taekwondo, to keep him fit for his beloved sport.

The Barbados-born all-rounder from Hampstead started playing for the British Railways League in the 60s before he joined Gordon Hill's BRSA Enfield Club, now known as Holtwhites & Trinibis.

He's played for London University, a Thames TV side and has 14 caps to his name, batting and bowling for the England Over-70s. In one memorable season seven years ago, his side played Australia in three two-day tests and won all three!

Siggy came to Britain from Barbados aged 23 as part of the Windrush generation to help the British government fill vital jobs in hospitals, railways and hotels.

He landed in Southampton on 7 March 1962 after an 11-day voyage and started work as a cleaner in Marylebone station the very next day. "I remember it was strange because it was very cold. They paid for everything, found us somewhere to live and we paid it back as we worked."

Over the next 17 years at Marylebone he worked as a fireman, stoking steam engines, and a chargeman, supervising cleaners and the men who shunted the trains around the yard. He was then promoted to supervisor at Cricklewood Yard where he also shunted trains himself.

He was at Bedford when he was poached to be a stores manager at Luton then someone saw his abilities and stole him again, this time to be a platform supervisor at St Albans, in 1990.

In 2002 he came to Elstree & Borehamwood. "They needed someone with experience because the station was getting busier and busier," he said. He's been there ever since and is known by hundreds of commuters.

"I used to see them coming through the station when there were seven or eight; now they are big men or women, taller than me, with children of their own.

"What I like is mixing with people and conversing with them, getting to know them. I have hundreds of friends and I don't even know their names. Even the youngest come looking for me."

Will he ever retire? "I retired once when I was 65 but came back to work four weeks later. I was never a pub man, a smoker or a betting shop man so there was nothing for me to do. I play a lot of cricket, sometimes three times a week, and I think if I can do that I can work. I can't sit at home and do nothing."

This year his cricket club held a testimonial match for him and named the end of the ground in his honour. "We lost by two runs, but it was fabulous," he said. "Lots of people from the station came to see me play. That was special."