



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Black History
P R O J E C T

Newsletter

March 2005 Volume 3, Issue 1

BASA CONFERENCE - 10-5pm on 9 April 05
PUTTING THE "BLACK" BACK INTO BRITISH HISTORY:
TEACHING INCLUSIVE HISTORY IN SCHOOLS
at University College Northampton

This important one day conference is open to young people, parents, teachers, governors, students, curators, archivists, librarians and anyone who wants to see the contributions of Black and Asian people taught in schools. Organised by BASA (Black and Asian Studies Association), with support by Northamptonshire Black History Project and University College Northampton.

None of us can fully appreciate British history without knowing about the role of Black and Asian Britons in the distant and more recent past. Partial, inaccurate and exclusive history is of benefit to no-one and leads to a society in which citizens are not fully equipped with the knowledge to understand the past and hence the present, nor the power to challenge stereotypes, ignorance and racism.

It is imperative therefore that British Black history is comprehensively taught in our schools and that teachers are fully equipped with the knowledge and resources to enable them to do this properly. The inclusive imperative is also evident in the Race Relations Amendment Act and the National Curriculum.

The conference will consist of a combination of presentations and practical workshops demonstrating the opportunities and need for teaching British Black History in the National Curriculum. It will be a fantastic forum in which to exchange ideas, share good practice and discuss an agenda for the future.

FEE: £ 12 (BASA Members & concs), £15 (Others), £20 (Institutions) includes lunch and refreshments. Cheque must be supplied with booking.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL!

Contact Caroline Bressey by 31 March 2005 to book your place.

Please supply your name, address, email, contact telephone number, number of places and any dietary or access needs.

Return to: Dr Caroline Bressey, Department of Geography, University College London, 26 Bedford Way, LONDON, WC1H 0AP. T. 020 7679 7586.

t.bressey@ucl.ac.uk



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

Lost portrait of Mary Seacole on display at NPG

A lost painted portrait of Mary Seacole, an outstanding Crimean nurse, was revealed at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) in January 2005.

The only known painted portrait of Mary, it has been lent to the NPG for display by its owner, Helen Rappaport.

Mary's dedicated and humanitarian nursing during the Crimean War was for many years overshadowed by the work of Florence Nightingale, before she was re-discovered in the 1970s.

Voted the Greatest Black Briton in an online poll in February 2004, Mary Seacole was born in Jamaica in 1805 to a Scottish soldier and a mixed race mother who ran a boarding house for invalid soldiers.

Having learnt her nursing skills from her mother, at the outbreak of war in Russia in 1854, Mary sailed to England and tried to volunteer for Nightingale's nursing contingent. She was refused an interview, so undaunted and at her own cost, Mary made her own way to the Crimea where she had an enormous impact on the treatment of injured soldiers and nursing practice.

Mary remained in the Crimea until 1856, after which she returned to Britain destitute. She was awarded the British Crimean medal, the Turkish Medjidie and the French Legion of Honour. Her autobiography "*Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*" was published in 1857 and sold well. Mary returned to Jamaica for several years (1859–1865) and died in May 1881 at her home in Paddington, London. Her grave at Kensal Green Roman Catholic



Mary Seacole, AC Challen, 1869
 Courtesy of Helen Rappaport/ National Portrait Gallery, London

cemetery was re-consecrated at the instigation of Jamaican nurses who rediscovered it in 1973.

The newly discovered portrait is by an obscure London artist called Albert Challen and dates from 1869. The portrait had been used to back a framed print and was only recently discovered when the inscription on the back "AC Challen, 1869" caught the eye of a dealer who unsealed the frame and discovered the hidden portrait.

It eventually ended up with Seacole researcher, Ms Rappaport, who liaised with NPG for it to be displayed to the public. To see Mary's portrait visit NPG, St Martin's Place, London. Telephone 020 7306 0055.

The latest batch of interviews to be placed by the project at Northamptonshire Record Office were recorded with the following people:

Winnie Caesar
 Superintendent Ray Campbell
 George (photo) & Medlin Cleghorn
 Max & Valerie Ferreira
 Mavis Midgely-Bryan
 Surenda Samani



Facilities are available for you to listen to these recordings at the Record Office, Mere Way, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. Telephone 01604 762129

BBC Northamptonshire Website

Extract extracts taken from some of the interviews that the project has recorded are available on the BBC's website.

For example, you can find out more about: June Gulley, George Cleghorn and Meharban and Mohinder Plahay on the website.

Visit the website at:
www.bbc.co.uk/northamptonshire



Community archiving

The records of 11 Black community organisations representing at least 40 years of activity in the county have now been processed by project staff. Most of these are available at Northamptonshire Record Office.

In early February, a large collection of posters, leaflets and documents carefully collected by Alan Howard over many years, were placed in the care of the Local Studies section of Central Library, Northampton. This information represents a fantastic source of information about Black history events and activities in the county and are inspiration to all of us.

Some of the other organisations we have worked with include: Ghana Union, Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls Centre, Sankofa and Northampton African Caribbean Organisation. If you would like to find out more about how you can contribute, please contact Nikki Taylor on 01604 590967.

The Black History Project to become an Association

On 8 February 2005, the Management Committee of the Northamptonshire Black History Project (NBHP) held an open public meeting to discuss the future of the project. Over 50 people attended and took part in a lively debate about how the organisation should look in the future.

At the meeting there was overwhelming support for the current activities of the project but recognition that there would not be the same scale of funding available in the future.

It was agreed that NBHP should look at forming an Association and investigate the opportunities for generating income by developing a trading arm. The latter is being investigated by Clarke-McGrath Partnership, appointed as the consultants to take this initiative forward (funded by a grant from SEEM).

A follow up meeting was held on 24 February at which a group of 16 people agreed the vision and aims for the Northamptonshire Black History Association. These are set out as follows:

Vision

The association exists to:

*Generate, maintain and/ or promote resources for the continued collection, dissemination and appreciation of *Black British History.*

Goals

- To empower Black communities and the wider community, and challenge racist attitudes by providing training courses, and by demonstrating the contributions and achievements of Black individuals and communities throughout British history.
- To act as the custodian of materials, research and any intellectual and physical copyright generated by and assigned to the Northamptonshire Black History Project.
- To continue to foster relationships between communities, statutory heritage providers (such as libraries, archives and museums) and educational institutions.

'Black' is defined in the context of this organisation as *"any individual or group who defines their identity by reference to visibility vis-à-vis the effects of racism. It includes people and groups from visible minority communities, especially those with African and/or Asian origins."*

Next meeting: 15 March 6.30pm, SANKOFA, 31 Billing Road, Northampton

Open to anyone committed to taking the Association forward.

For further information contact: Carolyn Abel on tel. 01604 590967 or email: director@northants-black-history.org.uk

Project short listed for national award

Shortlist for the 2005 CILIP/LiS Libraries Change Lives Award announced

The Northamptonshire Black History Project, as a community-led initiative, is one of three projects that is in the running for the "coveted" 2005 CILIP/LiS Libraries Change Lives Award. The winner of the award will be announced by poet and writer Benjamin Zephaniah on Wednesday 20 April 2005 at the Library and information Show (LiS), The Pavilion, NEC, Birmingham.

This is testament to the hard work of the project's staff and volunteers, management committee, the support of Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council, partners and all those that have contributed to and participated in this unique project in a variety of ways.

The project grew from the desire by local Black grassroots organisations and individuals to redress the failure to substantially recognise the contributions of Black Britons to the development of British history by mainstream services such as libraries, archives, museums, schools and other agencies.

Invitation to supporters of the Black History Project by the School Governors Service

Northamptonshire County Council School Governors Service has been following the development of the Black History Project with interest. We wish the newly planned Northamptonshire Black History Association every success for the future.

We noted that one of the goals of the Association was to empower Black communities and the wider community and to challenge racist attitudes by demonstrating the contributions of Black individuals and groups in Northamptonshire.

Another way in which Black communities can become more empowered is as members of school governing bodies. There are many examples of how school governance has been part of the route to free training, greater confidence and a sense of fulfilment in helping to shape the education of children.

The County Council is currently planning a new programme of awareness sessions, entitled 'Becoming a School Governor' for those interested in learning about this important role. We are also considering the hosting of a Black governors' support group: if you have any suggestions on this, do please get in touch.

If you would like further information about being a school governor, please contact: Angela Scheidegger, telephone 01604 236216, fax 01604 237441, or email: ascheidegger@northamptonshire.gov.uk. Details can also be found on our website, www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/learning (follow the links to School Governors). We look forward to hearing from you.

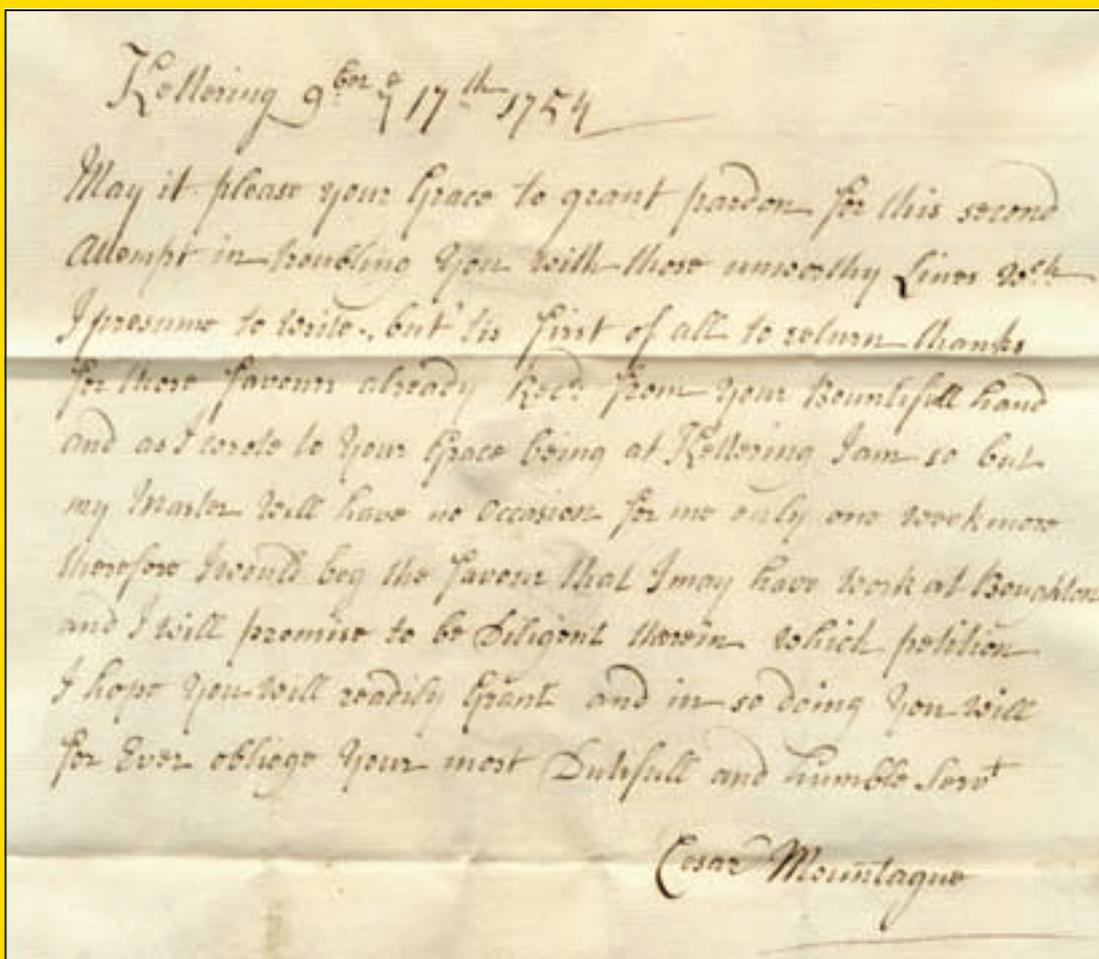
Research Update

Northamptonshire has recently uncovered it's own historical treasures.

A group that regularly meet at Northamptonshire Record Office to examine local collections housed there, unearthed a series of letters and references in the Boughton House Collection which relate to Caesar Shaw, a former servant at Boughton House. For example, in the estate accounts of 1742, one of the entry states "Paid Nathaniel Cooper, Tailor, a bill for making servants livery and a suit of clothes for Caesar the black £1 8s 0d" and in 1745 an entry reads "Paid John Henderson for Irish cloth for Ceaser & Walter 17s 6d."

Although most of the letters are between the estate managers at Boughton and the Montague home in London, they are in response to a letter, probably written by Caesar, to the Countess of Cardigan on 17 November 1754.

We already have plenty of evidence that the Duke of Montague paid for the education of his servants so it is highly likely that this letter was written by Caesar. For example, an entry in the estate account book 1727/28 states "To Mr. Crockley for black boy school &c.—a pr. Bill £3.1/-".



Courtesy of Northamptonshire Record Office & Boughton House

In the letter above, Caesar is asking about the possibility of work at Boughton House as his current employment is due to finish shortly.

Racial Equality Officer

£24,000 (APT & C Points 32-36)

pro-rata (£9600) (pay award pending)

**We are seeking a highly motivated and committed caseworker for this
Kettering based project**

To provide advice, advocacy

- To clients under the 1976 Race Relations Act (amended 2000).
- And support on issues of immigration and nationality.
- And professional assistance to NREC locality group Race Action Kettering.

For an application form contact NREC,

c/o Victoria Centre, Palk Road, Wellingborough NN8 1HT or complete your application form online at www.northamptonshirerec.com

The closing date for applications is Monday 21st March 2005

**Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council is an
Equal Opportunities Employer**

Registered Charity number 1097767 Company registration 4734851

Research update continued - Noticeboard

With over 650 Black history references stretching back to 1205, these are just two of the latest:

Posted by Paul Bingham (Sessional Worker)

- *"NEGRO LIFE", 18th & 25th September 1858, Northampton Mercury*

Several articles report on the talks given in Northampton and Kettering by George Parnell. Described as a "gentleman of Colour" on 18 September, the article on 25 September states, "An escaped slave named G. Parnell has been lecturing at the Swans Assembly Room this week, giving an account of his escape, recapture, and then his escape again, with other particulars of negro life."

Posted by Nicola Taylor (Community Research Officer)

- *"Indian Band at the Fete", 2 August 1924, The Northampton Independent*

This article reports that "One of the most attractive features of the forthcoming Flower Show at Abington Park, ... will undoubtedly be the splendid band of the 4/8th Punjab Regiment, known as the Prince of Wales' Own.... The band comprises Sikhs and Punjabi Mohammedans...." In the same edition there is an advert for the concert as part of the Northampton Municipal Horticultural Show.

Interested in getting involved in the Management Committee?

Our community representatives on the Management Committee include the following groups:

- African Association
- Council for Ethnic Minority Communities
- Bethel United Church
- Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls Centre
- Ghana Union
- Islamic Pakistani Community Centre
- Liberian Association
- Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council
- Northamptonshire Somali Community
- Sri Guru Singh Sabha
- Wellingborough Black Consortium

- Wellingborough African Caribbean Association (WACA)
- West Indian Parents Association

This is your opportunity to participate.

Membership is open to anyone prepared to get involved. We are keen to hear from people outside Northampton and Wellingborough, particularly in rural areas.

If you, or your organisation, are interested in participating please contact Carolyn Abel, Director, on telephone 01604 590967.

Our other partners include:

- Libraries and Information Service
- Northampton Museums & Art Gallery
- University College Northampton

And finally, where can you find us?

The Project team are based at:

Northamptonshire Black History Project
Doddridge Centre
109 St James Road
Northampton NN5 5LD

You can contact us on:

Telephone: 01604 590967

Website:

www.northamptonshirerec.org.uk

The core team includes:

Carolyn Abel - Director
Nicola Taylor - Community Research Officer
Eric Asumang - Administration Officer

Email:

- director@northants-black-history.org.uk
- research@northants-black-history.org.uk
- admin@northants-black-history.org.uk

Comments, feedback or contributions welcome

