



# Black History in the Making

The Northamptonshire Black History Association exists to put Black History on the record – whether it is happening now, or whether it happened here hundreds of years ago. Black History Month was celebrated in many different ways across Northamptonshire. These celebrations added to the year-round growth of Black History in our county, and also to local links into national and international Black History.



Trevor Phillips - Chairman of the CRE

## Visit by Trevor Phillips

Many members and supporters of the Northamptonshire Black History Association were present at the University of Northampton on 27 October 2005, when Trevor Phillips, the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, gave an important speech titled 'Equality in Our Lifetime? Talking About a Revolution'. Well-known for his work on television, which included some of the first televised Black History, Trevor Phillips spoke

powerfully about recent unrest in Birmingham, and about the New Orleans flood, linking these to his previous controversial statements on the dangers of Britain 'sleepwalking to segregation'. He suggested that it was possible to avoid 'tragedy waiting to happen' through addressing issues of social integration. Integration is a 'two-way street', and pride in ethnic and religious heritage can be combined with 'creative compromises' to achieve a successful multi-ethnic society.

Suggesting that Britain needs a 'Highway Code' of behaviour which takes account of all citizens and balances freedom with respect, Trevor Phillips asked the audience to get 'ready for the integration revolution': 'to climb into the saddle and get on with it'. In the question and answer session which followed the talk, many members of the audience expressed some doubts about what they had heard. Does the 'integration revolution' rest upon political issues, and issues of economic equality, rather than upon individuals' attitudes and behaviour towards each other?

Did Trevor Phillips underestimate the importance of protecting cultural roots in an integrated society? The debate went on long after the speaker had departed.



Lilian Bader - 2005

### Lilian Bader

As the June 2005 issue of the NBHP newsletter mentioned, Lilian Bader was the last person to be interviewed for the project.

Lilian Bader described her achievements and experiences, whilst in the WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force), and later in her personal life. She also spoke about the wartime contributions made by both her family and her husband's, Ramsey Bader, foster son of Ernest Bader, founder of the Scott Bader company. In 1939, Ramsey joined the army and in 1944 he took part in the D-Day Normandy Invasion. Tracing his natural family some years later revealed an older brother, Benjamin, who became a sergeant major and won the military medal for bravery.

Lilian Bader's wartime career began in 1939 with a short period in the NAAFI, which ended in dismissal, because her father had not been born in the UK. Perseverance to contribute to the war effort eventually led to her being accepted in the WAAF in 1941<sup>1</sup>. Lilian rose to Acting Corporal; she was the only woman to receive her stripes and recalls, 'there was no establishments ... for NCOs, WAAF NCOs so they got special permission for me to be given my stripes'.



Lilian and Ramsey were married in 1943 and in February 1944 she received her discharge papers on compassionate grounds (she was pregnant). Changes during the war period meant that Lilian was permitted to work at the NAAFI until she moved to Northamptonshire to have her first child.

Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London. Reference No. IWM HU 53753

This interview will shortly be available at the Northamptonshire Record Office. In the meantime the wartime memoirs of Lilian Bader are featured in *Together*, a multi media pack produced by the

Imperial War Museum about the contribution made in the Second World War by African, Asian and Caribbean men and women. Further suggestions for reference include: Prof. Robert O'Neill *Imperial War Museum*  
 Susannah Hoe *The man who gave his company away*  
 Ray Costello/Jean Emmerson *Black Liverpool 1730 -1918*

<sup>1</sup> Ben Bousquet and Colin Douglas *West Indian Women at War – British Racism in World War II*



Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London.  
Reference No. IWM D3528.

### **People of British Guiana send their support to the 'Mother Country' during World War II**

A mobile canteen stationed at Chelmsford, Essex which has been bought by the people of British Guiana. The canteen travels to local districts feeding the homeless after an air attack and also giving refreshment to Civil Defence workers. This canteen is being run by the WVS, Women's Voluntary Service.

### **Race 2 Score Project**

The Race 2 Score project has been a great part in our education. It has made us more aware of the racism and discrimination going on around us. We have been taught about Black History and learnt about the achievements of Walter Tull, Precious McKenzie, Anita Neil and of the obstacles they faced. For instance, the racial abuse that Walter Tull suffered during a football match in 1909 is indescribable. The Race 2 Score project touches areas in life that wouldn't be touched, and areas in life that no one would want to approach. It means a great deal to us and although there is still some work to do, we will continue to learn and have fun throughout...

*Written by Titi, with the help of Lorna, Jade, Sophie and Elisa.*



Kingsthorpe Community College R2S group

### **Black History Month in Northampton** by Janet Douglas Hall

Northampton Black Arts and Culture Forum held their first Community Showcase on Saturday 29 October as part of the celebration of Black History Month. The event was a resounding success and was presented mainly by the youth of the town. There were a wide range of features including modern dance sequences, folk and traditional dances from Africa, solo singers, and poetry. The youngsters were able to involve the audience, creating a lovely inclusive atmosphere which was warm and relaxed. A special tribute was made to Mr Cleghorn who spent years in the RAF during World War II.

Further Black History Month events reviewed on **page 7...**



NPG London

### **Ira Aldridge** by Maria Patten

Ira Aldridge was born in New York on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1807. His father intended him for the church and sent him to New York's African Free School where many future leaders of the American abolitionist movement were educated. But young Ira was attracted to the theatre and the only way for an ambitious young Black actor to succeed was to emigrate and when he was 17 or 18 Aldridge worked his passage to Liverpool as a ship's steward.

His first known British performance was at the Royal Coburg (now known as the Old Vic) on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1825 as Oroonoko in the *Revolt of Surinam, or a Slave's Revenge*. His first performance received a mixed reception and purely on account of Aldridge's colour, the press was largely hostile which prevented him from establishing himself in London. However, he travelled and performed around England's provinces for the next few years and continued to win respect. In 1833 Aldridge became the victim of a sustained London press campaign motivated by racism. Aldridge was boycotted by the West End stage and decided to seek recognition on the continent. In 1852 Aldridge and his family sailed for Europe. He played in major European cities and returned to London so loaded with honours that the West End stage could no longer exclude him. Aldridge received an invitation to give 12 performances at St Petersburg Imperial Theatre in Russia; after touring Britain he visited Moscow again for 14 further performances.

He undertook several tours of the provinces in 1861-66 visiting many places where no foreign actor had set foot before. While on tour he died in Lodz, Poland on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1867 at the age of 59. The whole town turned out to mourn the passing of an artist of world stature.

Ira Aldridge performed *Othello* twice in the theatre in Northampton on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1831 and again on 30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December 1846.

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### **Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900**

A spectacular new art exhibition is coming soon to a town near you ... unfortunately Birmingham, rather than Northampton or Wellingborough. A visit will be well worth the journey for anyone interested in Black History. The exhibition opens from **28 January – 6 April 2006 at the Birmingham Art Gallery**, and entrance is free.

The exhibition shows over a hundred images of Black people in Victorian Britain, ranging from beautiful, admiring portraits to vicious racist caricatures. In the book accompanying the exhibition, David Dabydeen notes, in the forward, that '*Black Victorians* is a splendid addition to the arduous but exciting efforts to make black people a visible presence in British society'.

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### Oral History Update

The huge task of transcribing is nearly complete; all 191 English spoken interviews have now been transcribed; this leaves just 9 foreign language interviews which are currently being worked on.

Why not visit the Record Office where you can access the summaries, full interviews and oral recordings of the 60 interviews already deposited.

**Northamptonshire Record Office, Mereway, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. Telephone 01604 762129.**

Some of the latest interviews to be deposited include the following people:

Dr. A. Layes Molla	Evans Njolinjo	Savita Paw
Ravi and Bhanu Chopra	Gertie Flannery	Dionne Gravesande
Carl McFarlane	John Brownell	Gerald Landsberg
Felicia Monica Noel	Angela Brown	Michelle Jackson

### 'First Impressions – An Afternoon at the Record Office'



The Northamptonshire Black History Project has recorded and transcribed oral history interviews with more than two hundred local people. Northamptonshire Black History Association is now encouraging the use and enjoyment of these fascinating histories. Users include Black History researchers, students, schoolchildren and the general public. Most importantly of all – the people who made the oral history archive possible are now invited to enjoy its achievements.

The Black History oral history archive is located at Northamptonshire Record Office, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. On **18 February 2006**, 2.30 - 4.30pm, everyone involved in creating this magnificent collection of interviews is invited to attend 'First Impressions – an Afternoon at the Record Office'. Archivist Jenny Moran is putting together a talk based on interview extracts, portraying the arrival and early experiences of first-generation settlers in Britain and Northamptonshire. As well as listening to the talk, visitors are invited to tour the Record Office and to share their memories further over tea and cakes.

Free transport to the Record Office will be arranged from the NBHA office at the Doddridge Centre, St James Road, Northampton. Lifts can also be arranged to Northampton from other parts of the county, on request. If you have contributed to the oral history collection and you would like to attend this event, please write or phone NBHA at the Doddridge Centre.

**(01604 590967 or [admin@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:admin@northants-black-history.org.uk))**



Peter Bush with Bobb Lewis

## A Partnership for the Future

On 21 October 2005 a formal Partnership Agreement was signed between Northamptonshire Black History Association and the University of Northampton. The signatories were Bobb Lewis, the NBHA Chairman, and Professor Peter Bush, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) from the University. The ceremony at the University

Senate Building was also attended by Mrs Lewis and Nikki Taylor, Janet Douglas-Hall, Ruchira Leisten and Julia Bush from the NBHA committee, as well as by Paul Crofts (University Equality and Diversity officer) and several press representatives.

The Partnership Agreement sets out an ambitious programme for long-term collaboration between NBHA and the University. NBHA will contribute towards the teaching of Black History and teacher training, as well as collaborating in the University's future research programme. The University will assist the funding of NBHA's core activities and subsidise course fees for part-time students of Black History. Collaborative work will include the organisation of a number of 'outreach' educational events during 2006, providing local Black community organisations with an opportunity to link more closely to the University's expanding facilities and course provision.

## A Black History Day in Bristol: 1 April 2006

NBHA invites you to join our 'day out' in Bristol on **Saturday 1 April 2006**. We will be travelling by coach from the Doddridge Centre, and everyone is welcome. Departure will be at 9.00am and return around 6.00pm. Coach fare: £14 (£7 children).

Why Bristol? For several reasons. Bristol played a major role in Black History as Britain's second biggest city in the eighteenth century and a leading slave port for over 150 years. Local historians have combed the evidence of archives, pictures, parish registers, local newspapers, gravestones etc (as we have done in Northamptonshire) for records of the Black presence in the city. Bristol has a large Black population in the twenty-first century, and local Black History is flourishing. A Black History Trail has been created around the dockside and city centre areas, and Bristol is also home to a large Museum of Empire and Commonwealth which charts Black History as well as British Empire History around the globe. **Please book your tickets early, as we expect this trip to be popular! To book, phone or email Nikki Taylor at the Doddridge Centre: 01604 590967 or [research@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:research@northants-black-history.org.uk)**

### **Heartstone - raising awareness of Islamaphobia**

In conjunction with the national charity Heartstone, the Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council has been working with partners from the Police, Education and Northampton Borough Council to try and develop a story module raising awareness of the dangers of Islamaphobia and Islamophobic attitudes. The project focuses on schools through the development of a teaching module in CD ROM format to be used with the *Voices of Kabul* photo documentary resources. This documentary consists of images taken in Kabul in 2002 just after the Taliban had lost power in Afghanistan.

Funding has now been secured to allow the production of a CD ROM teaching package specifically for use in ten Northamptonshire schools to try and encourage school students to relate to the humanity of Muslim people rather than the labels. In addition there are opportunities for local schools to link with a school in Faizalabad via internet and email links with video conferencing technology, thereby creating opportunities for young people locally to really relate to young people living in the Muslim countries.

For more information about the pilot contact **Anjona Roy** at Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council **01933 278000** or **[aroy@northamptonshirerec.org.uk](mailto:aroy@northamptonshirerec.org.uk)**

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## **Reviews of Black History Month - continued**

### **Wellingborough Black History Month** by Jenny Labbon

There were varied events in various venues with varied attendance and ... various feedback comments. There was a fantastic finale held at the Castle. Not only were the Showcase artists of good quality – held together by the dulcet tones of compère, Merle Roach and the technical expertise of Castle staff – the audience response was incredibly warm and supportive.

The next Wellingborough event will be **February 2007** and will be called African History Month – the change in date and name is to align with the celebrations in the USA and to enable the Wellingborough Black Arts Consortium to acquire stable resources that can be used to specifically detail the histories of people of the African Diasporas.

For further information contact **Jenny Labbon** on **07984 231 189**.

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## Stop Press! Black History Course begins again in January

Why not begin the New Year with a course in local, national and international Black History? Last year's successful course, run jointly by Northamptonshire Black History Association and the University of Northampton, begins again on **11 January 2006**. The course runs on Wednesday evenings, 6.00 - 8.00pm, at Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton. Course fee: £50.

To reserve a place, or for further information, please contact **Julia Bush on 01604 722167**, or by email to  **julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk**.

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### Calendar of events

#### 2005

**15 December**, 6.30pm, Doddridge Centre – End-of-Year NBHA Celebration/Committee Meeting (please bring some food and drink: all members welcome)

#### 2006

**11 January**, 6.00 - 8.00pm, University of Northampton, Park Campus – start of Black British History: From Past to Present (12-week course)

**19 January**, 6.30pm, Guildhall – NBHA Committee

**18 February**, 2.30 - 4.30pm – 'First Impressions': an Oral History Afternoon at Northamptonshire Record Office

**9 March**, 6.30pm, Guildhall – NBHA Committee

**1 April**, 9.30am departure from Doddridge – NBHA Day Visit to Bristol

**28 June** - Race 2 Score Black History Performance

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### Where can you find us?

Northamptonshire Black History Association is based at

**Doddridge Centre, 109 St James Road, Northampton NN5 5LD**

Phone: 01604 590967

Email: admin@northants-black-history.org.uk

**Please contact us at this address for further information on all NBHA's plans and activities, and please come and join in!**

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