



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Black History
A S S O C I A T I O N

Newsletter

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Looking Forward

Northamptonshire Black History Project has been a national and local success. The community-led project has been acknowledged for its innovative and exciting work in uncovering, previously hidden, Black histories in Northamptonshire. This work will be continued by the Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA).



Project members with Benjamin Zephaniah

Bobb Lewis, as Chairman of the Northamptonshire Black History Association says, "I embrace this unique opportunity to express all our thanks for the hard work and dedication to the cause previously demonstrated by all the staff, volunteers, sessional workers, committee members and supporters of Northamptonshire Black History Project.

Today the metamorphosis is complete: Northamptonshire Black History Project will henceforth be Northamptonshire Black History Association. We are very fortunate to be the inheritors of all the good work done by so many. I am sure all of you will agree when I say it must be our paramount duty to build on the excellent foundation that has been handed down to us. There is much in our past to arouse our passions for the challenges ahead. We need only to examine the many impressive achievements of our benefactors NBHP.

There is much unfinished work to be done by all of us if our fledgling organisation NBHA is to demonstrate that it has been a worthy successor to NBHP. This will require greater community and individual involvement by our many friends, all of whom I am sure are sympathetic to our work.

I appeal to all of you to seize this opportunity to come to the table and join in our work in support of this great cause. Your labour will never be lost. It will endure like the sunrise and the sunset and will forever be a benefit to all the peoples of Northamptonshire - those who have gone before, those who are present, and those who are yet to come."

60th Anniversary of End of World War II



George Cleghorn

George was born in Jamaica in 1924. Work opportunities were poor when he left school aged 16, however, he was ambitious to learn a trade and earn a good wage. Hearing that England wanted men for the war effort, he decided to join the RAF. "We came to defend the Mother country and our country." He arrived in England and was billeted at Bicester, where he saw King George. The soldiers were popular with the local people and George enjoyed a good social life. However, there was general fear that they would be sent to Burma: "fortunately King George was good and he didn't send us to there. No he didn't send us."

At the end of the war Jamaican recruits were offered repatriation and compensation. George returned home but he came back to England in 1960. Sadly people were no longer as friendly. "It was a complete different atmosphere. I was taken aback, surprised, as if the White people of England didn't never see a Black person before." George proudly wears the medal he earned for his war contributions and in recent years Northamptonshire policemen have escorted him to London for the Remembrance Day parade where he has been able to see the Queen.



Salem Family

Godfrey Salem's family has lived and worked in Northampton during much of the 20th century. His father, Abdul, served in the First World War. Godfrey Salem was very young during the Second World War but he remembers the wartime work of his brother Albert, his sister Mooren and her husband, Arthur. The two men were in the army and for a while they were both at El Alamein, Albert as a private, and Arthur a sergeant; they did not meet up until Mooren and Arthur were married. Before he went into the army Albert produced cartoons and Godfrey recalls that, "he used to send cartoons back when he was in the army for the Chronicle & Echo."

Mooren was in the Land Army and worked on a farm in the Kingsthorpe area. Godfrey remembers, "when she came out she had a Land Army hat ... and I took her hat and used it as a cowboy hat." Mooren went on to work at a munitions factory situated at Salcey Forest.



Albert Salem



Mooren Salem

NHBP Updates

NHBP has deposited 60 Oral History interviews at the Record Office, this is in keeping with the original objective of the project. The deposits are the summaries, full transcripts and oral recordings. The process of preparing interviews for deposit will be continued by the voluntary work of the members of the NBHA.

The project has recorded 200 interviews, this includes group interviews and means a total of 239 interviewees have been recorded for future use.

Community Archiving – 7 deposits have been made at the Record Office. This includes Northampton Afro Caribbean Organisation whose records contain documents relating to a further 6 organisations – a total of 13 altogether. We have also deposited Alan Howard's collection at Northampton Central Library, Local Studies section. Therefore, 15 community archiving deposits have been made in total.

Historical Research – the project has recorded 585 references. This has entailed a lot of work, including checking and cross checking the information found. The references cover all parts of the County. The project has successfully cross checked the oldest Black history record in Northamptonshire from 1205: Peter the Saracen, a crossbow maker.

All deposited interviews and recordings can be read and listened to at the **Northamptonshire Record Office, Mereway, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. Telephone 01604 762129.**

The extracts of George Cleghorn and Godfrey Salem interviews – mentioned in the 60th Anniversary of End of World War II, on page 2 of this newsletter – are among the many interviews available for reference.

Further interview extracts are available on the local BBC website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northamptonshire>

This website currently highlights five oral history interviews - with audio links to the interviews, and it also explains the background to the Northamptonshire Black History Project.

Additional information is available from **Northampton Central Library, Local Studies Department, Abington Street, Northampton. Telephone 01604 462040.**

End of Project Party - July 22

People from far and wide attended the end of project party, and a great time was had by all. There were speeches, dancing, food, laughter and a whole lot more...



Northampton Carnival

The Northampton carnival is back! This year everyone had a great day. To make sure you are part of it next year, here is a date for your diary: **10 June 2006** - Carnival time.



Race 2 Score

Race 2 Score is a school-year long project to develop and produce a performance exploring racism, in particular racism in sport. This is a direct response to the identified need to tackle issues of racism in schools and historical ignorance around the contributions of Black people. Drawing on the extensive resources created by the Northamptonshire Black History Project, we are using historical evidence to put the issues of racism in their historical and social contexts, for example, the case of the footballer, Walter Tull. Drama and sport are being used as vehicles to achieve the aims of this project.

The project started on 19th September. The project is working with a group of young people from Springboard in Corby and groups from The Duston School, Unity College and Kingsthorpe Community College.

Black History Month October 2005

This year heralds the 10th Anniversary in Northamptonshire, of formally celebrating the achievements of people of the African diasporas. The programme is launched on **Friday 30 September, 7.30 pm** at the Castle, Wellingborough, with local musicians and Kwanzaa representation on the principles of Kuumba (Creativity). Comedienne Miss Pearly will compère the evening. There will be displays of local Black visual artists throughout the month in the same venue. Service Six (youth counsellors in Wellingborough) will also have a small tribute to the island of Jamaica and the influence of Marcus Garvey. To book tickets for Castle events, contact **01933 270007**.

Just some of the activities will include lectures in the community by Kwesi Bacchra and at University of Northampton by Dr Mona Siddiqui and Trevor Phillips; a month-long youth service programme; and a library event in which local writer Nicole Moore speaks explicitly about the history of Black literature. Nicole will also host a poetry workshop at WACA, where people can get involved in creating a unique group piece, and animation workshops with Danny Chevelleau.

Northampton Black Arts and Culture Forum will hold their first Community Showcase on **Saturday 8 October** at ACES. For details, contact **Zara on 01604 736206**. The programme finale on **Saturday 29 October** showcases local Black talent. *Could this be You?* We are appealing to people who originate from or live in this area who might be able to contribute, be it in the form of music, comedy, drama... or maybe you have something completely different! To take part contact **Wenna on 01933 221847** or to help with the organising please contact **Jenny on 0798 4231189**.

Introducing... Northamptonshire Black History Association

Northamptonshire Black History Association was launched on 22 July at the party celebrating the achievements of the three-year, lottery-funded Black History Project. NBHA aims to take up from where the Project ended: to continue local Black History research, and especially to make sure that the stories of Black people in Northamptonshire are recorded, published and given full recognition.

Here are some of the Association's plans so far:

Membership. Individual members are encouraged to join the Association and to further encourage local organisations to support the Association through affiliation. Forms are enclosed - these are also available from the Doddridge Centre.

Legal status. NBHA is applying to become a company with charitable status, so as to have the best possible legal framework for our work and for future fund-raising.

Management committee. NBHA is run by an 'open' committee, which all members are welcome to attend. Some members have agreed to become company directors, and will take responsibility for key decisions. Some will also become charitable trustees. Please contact NBHA at the Doddridge Centre if you would like to take on one of these roles, or to come to our meetings.

Office arrangements. NBHA is based at the established Project offices in the Doddridge Centre, Northampton. Nicola Taylor works from there as NBHA's Community Education Officer. The office is also used by part-time NBHA workers and volunteers, and members' visits are welcome.

Plans for education and publications. The Black History Project has already recovered a wealth of local Black History. Now is the time to share this knowledge, to spread Black History out into local schools, community organisations, and the general public. Watch the Newsletter for NBHA's plans to publish exhibitions, a website and research database, books, pamphlets, CDs and school curriculum resources. Members will help to make it all happen!

Funding. NBHA has obtained new funding from the County Council and the University of Northampton, to help it through its first year as an independent organisation. We are asking the Heritage Lottery Fund to support our work with schools. We are also raising funds through membership subscriptions, and have plans to become a social enterprise trading NBHA's publications and research and training expertise.

Northamptonshire Black History Project TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

In September 2005 NBHA took delivery of our own travelling exhibition on Northamptonshire Black History. Consisting of ten roller-banners, which can be set up for display within minutes, the Exhibition displays some of the most fascinating stories uncovered by the past three years of local Black History research.

Panel themes include: '800 years of Northamptonshire Black History!' - 'A Community Grows' - 'Memorials to Black People' - 'On Tour in Northamptonshire' - 'Invisible Women' - 'Making History for the Future'. The choice of content reflects the variety of Black History in Northamptonshire, and includes vivid images of 'celebrities' alongside the stories of less well-known people from past centuries. Carolyn Abel, Project Director, comments that the main problem was deciding what to leave out. There is plenty of scope for an expanded exhibition in the future.

Two copies of the exhibition are available for hire from the NBHA office at the Doddridge Centre, Northampton. Bookings for Black History Month were already coming in before the Exhibition was delivered, and it can be viewed at various venues around the county during October. For your booking, please contact **Nicola Taylor on 01604 590967**, or email **research@northants-black-history.org.uk**.

Black History: From Past to Present

This popular twelve-week course is back at the University of Northampton in January 2006 – at a lower fee than in January 2005, thanks to a special subsidy. With the help of the Black History Project's local research, you can study many different aspects of Black History on Wednesday evenings at the University's Park Campus from 6.00-8.00pm (11 January to 29 March).

The course opens with discussion of the scope of Black History, and its place in World History. Further sessions explore historical connections between India, Africa, the Caribbean, America and Britain. The second half of the course moves on to the more recent history of Black people in Britain, investigating contemporary experiences of Black communities. Tutors are Julia Bush, Andrew Pilkington and Nicola Taylor, together with visiting speakers Morcea Walker, Jenny Labbon, Wajiha Mohammed and Kathy Chater.

The course fee is £50. At the end of the course there is an optional day-visit to Bristol, to follow the dock-side Black History Trail, and to visit the Museum of Empire and Commonwealth. NBHA members, friends and family are invited along for this visit, on **1 April 2006**.

Interested in getting involved in NBHA?

Here are some ways to support the Northamptonshire Black History Association and its future work:

- become a member of NBHA today! (form enclosed)
- encourage your organisation to affiliate to NBHA, and to deposit its archives at the Record Office
- attend NBHA committee meetings
- become a director or trustee of NBHA
- visit the NBHA offices at the Doddridge Centre
- read the NBHA Newsletter, and contribute your own news/ photos/ advertisements/ suggestions
- join NBHA's ongoing work in research, publishing and education, for example by helping to develop schools' materials in Black History; recording and transcribing oral history interviews; studying University/NBHA courses on Black British History; taking part in NBHA social events, meetings and outings.



The Liberian Dance Troupe at the end of project party, July 2005

The Northamptonshire Black History Project has been supported for three years by thirteen local Black community organisations.

NBHA plans to continue and strengthen these links into the future. NBHA will also build upon its established partnerships with Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service, Northampton Museums, Northamptonshire Record Office and the University of Northampton.

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!
