



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Black History
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Summer 2007

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NBHA Tour London

The Northamptonshire Black History Association teamed up with the London-based Black Heritage Group on Saturday 28 April. Our party of 51 were warmly welcomed and hosted on our London trip. Our group of children, young people and adults of all ages left in the morning from the Doddridge Centre to arrive at Riverside Youth Centre, Deptford, where we began our heritage experience.

Before lunch our host Devon Thomas introduced us to fellow-members who gave us an enriching educational experience. Black Heritage Group speakers included Libationist George 'Fowokan' Kelly, artist, sculptor and writer; Winston Best, historian and director of the Caribbean Readers and Performers Project; Dr Roi Kwabena, social anthropologist and publisher of the journal **Dialogue**; Donald Hinds, historian and activist who worked with Claudia Jones and was the



youngest reporter on the **West Indian Gazette**. We were welcomed by Harry Powell, educator and sportsman, and one of the first black players in senior league football, as well as community manager of the Riverside Youth Club. We were then treated to a flavour of the Caribbean with a delicious buffet lunch prepared by Avis and Anne.



We boarded the coach to the National Maritime Museum, where we were met at the entrance by curator Indie Choudhury. The Black Heritage Group, like NBHA, works closely with its local museums. Indie and her colleague gave us a presentation about people and artefacts relating to slavery, the slave trade, abolition and resistance. We finished with an insightful talk from Mr James Fairweather on his life and times as a Second

World War Royal Air Force veteran: he reminisced about the Nazis' genocide of Black Germans as well as the Jews. Later, he became a community activist who worked with Claudia Jones as advertising manager for the **West Indian Gazette**, the first regularly published black radical journal in the UK. He also worked closely with Rudy Narayan, radical black lawyer and founder of Black Rights UK.

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NBHA Tour London... continued

Our party visited the gallery which explores Britain's Trade and Empire from the seventeenth century to the post-abolition period. The skilled and responsive curators, including our escort speakers from the Black Heritage Group, guided us through the exhibition of paintings, artefacts, sculptures and information. A new gallery on the Atlantic Empire, including slave trade history, is planned for later this year.



Our tour over, we bade farewell to our hosts, and urged them to come and visit us in Northampton. Time depleting, the group enjoyed a final range of activities, from visiting Greenwich market to refreshing in pubs and cafés and viewing the Docklands, or exploring the playground, the parks and the shopping. We boarded the coach to arrive back in the light late evening.

Mr George Cleghorn

This week NBHA received the sad news that Mr Cleghorn has passed on. Our condolences go to Mrs Cleghorn and the family. Mr Cleghorn was a great man and a great supporter of our work. He served in the Royal Airforce during the Second World War, and believed it was very important to educate future generations about the war service of all the young volunteers from the Caribbean. After his return to Britain in 1960, he chose to live and work in Northampton for the rest of his life. He served the local community through his employment on the buses, but still more so through his dedicated voluntary work as a Deacon of his Church, a member of several local organisations, and a Governor of two schools. He gave generously of his time and effort to enable later generations to learn from his life story, recording two interviews for NBHA as well as contributing to local radio programmes and the book **Cold Arrivals**. Mr Cleghorn will be warmly remembered as a brave and good man, a proud Jamaican and a patriotic British citizen.



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The British Parliament legally abolished the slave trade on 25 March 1807. NBHA is supporting a Northampton commemorative project titled Freedom From the Past: Long Time Coming, sponsored by Churches Together, English Heritage and the Schools Excellence Cluster.

On 25 March around 500 people took part in two events at the New Testament Church of God and at St Giles Church, linked together by a solemn procession. At the opening service we remembered the suffering of slaves and the work of black and white abolitionists. Rose-Anne Auguste, a guest speaker from Haiti, reminded us of the continuing slavery today in many parts of the world. The silent procession to St Giles was joined together by a rope symbolising shackles and chains.



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At the second event Pastor Donovan Allen and David Wiseman reminded us of the role of Christian churches in the slave trade, both as supporters and critics of slavery. Other speakers included leading members of Northamptonshire's black community who explained how the legacies of transatlantic slavery reach into modern communities. Gareth Fuller directed lively musical performances by school and community choirs. Dramatic presentations and performance poetry, directed by Nikki Taylor, provided a contrasting space for reflection.

A DVD record of this memorable evening will soon be available.

2007 Bicentenary: Some Future Events

The Freedom from the Past project continues until September 2007.

Caroline Hussey-Bains will lead eight evening workshops at the Northampton West Indian Community Association, 42 Sheep Street, Northampton, beginning at 7.00 on Thursday 14 June. Titled **Cultural Passage**, the workshops will explore cultural links between Caribbean and African communities. Sessions include 'The Influence of the Drum', 'The Love of Storytelling', 'Fighting for Independence' and 'The Shared Black British Experience'. **For more information, call Mary Clarke on 07968 367060 or email freedomfromthepast@rubi.me.uk.**

8-9 September is Heritage Weekend in Northampton. Freedom From the Past: Long Time Coming is planning an event at Northampton Guildhall on 8 September. NBHA is also supporting an exhibition at the Quaker Meeting House in Wellington Street, about the anti-slavery movement past and present.

NBHA Chair



Bobb Lewis has been Chair of the Northamptonshire Black History Association since 2005 and has seen us through the transition from Northamptonshire Black History Project to Northamptonshire Black History Association. The Association has grown from strength to strength under his leadership. When he retired as Chair in April 2007, the committee presented him with a book and a life-time membership

of the Association. Bobb has said that he will treasure both gifts and will continue to be a member and a Director of the NBHA.

Ruchira Leisten, as Vice-Chair, took on the position of Chair.



New Staffing



Anne-Marie Sandos is our new Community Learning Officer. Anne-Marie has worked in museums and heritage for six years. During her career she has worked closely with African Caribbean, Chinese, Somali, Bengali and Yemeni groups. After successfully launching our new book on food heritage – **From Clanger to Coriander** – she is now developing two community learning projects based on language and performance.

Angela Ghavami has joined NBHA as our Administrator, and you can meet her most days at the Doddridge Centre. Her extensive experience as a business professional is a huge benefit for the Association. She says: "I am delighted to be working here and look forward to learning about Black History as well as providing a service to our community."



NBHA is currently employing two experts to contribute towards museum-based work for our education project. **Sara Burdett** is an ethnographer with a background in education and experience of working with a wide variety of collections. She looks forward to unlocking some secrets of the ethnographic collection in Northampton, and to meeting members of the community who will be able to enlighten her further!

Deb Martin is providing extra educational expertise for our project, advising on ways in which children and teachers can be encouraged to learn from museums. She is a teacher from Nottingham who also does freelance work for museums and heritage sites. She has worked in secondary and primary schools for many years, as well as spending a period as a health educator in Tanzania.

The first Community Learning Project has come to fruition, resulting in a publication that will make your mouth water. I took over from Don Allen, who did a lot of the leg work. He built up collaborations with Dostiyo Youth Group and Kettering Centre for the Unemployed gathering recipes, stories and histories. My role was to bring together all the findings into a book.

The first task was to find out more about the dishes: where they came from, what their ingredients were, who ate them and when they were eaten. I spent some time searching on the internet and in the library, discovering all kinds of fascinating facts which you can read in the book. As well as trying out many of the recipes myself, I had several volunteers to help cooking the dishes. I was very grateful for this help as otherwise I would have had to cook all 12 dishes by myself! Everyone took pictures of their dish which can be seen in the book.



The book launch was held at the Doddridge Centre on Thursday 24 May 2007. We heard interesting talks by participants from Kettering and by Shirley Brownbill, who has done fascinating research into the history of Jamaican cooking. Don Allen and I talked about carrying out the project, and afterwards everyone enjoyed some excellent food and food displays.



The following Saturday, we ventured out to Sainsbury's to promote the book with canapés of Coriander Chutney made from a recipe in the book. In general, the public reaction was friendly curiosity. The strong, distinctive taste of the chutney had a bit of a Marmite reaction. One member of Sainsbury's staff came back for fifths; not that we were counting!

Anne-Marie Sandos

The book is available for £3.50 from the NBHA Office: call 01604 590967.

More News from the NBHA Education Project

Overall our HLF-funded education project is in good shape, and on target. The NBHA cookbook is our first publication. Three curriculum resource packs about Walter Tull are now nearly complete, and have been edited in consultation with local teachers. A first draft of our Key Stage 3 pack titled 'From Slavery to Emancipation' has also been received, and contains exciting learning ideas. The museum work is moving ahead, as reported on page 4. NBHA has been invited to present its own museum display at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery in September 2007.

Creative Partnerships

The Northants Creative Learning Partnership Project is part of a national initiative which aims to engage more schools in *Creative Partnerships* practice. The Northamptonshire project is funded by the DFES, Arts Council East Midlands and



Northants County Council and is managed by Northants County Council. The aim is to link schools and the Creative and Cultural sector together to deliver research-focused project placements. Creative Practitioners are linked to schools as their Creative Partner, and work in collaboration with teachers, learners and the local authority.

Northamptonshire Black History Association has been working with students from Magdalen College School in Brackley to create a radio broadcast about subjects

that matter to them. NBHA has teamed up with Inspiration FM for this venture, which sees 18 Year 9 boys participating in all aspects of radio production. On Friday 18 May some of the students held a coffee morning for a few members of the over 50s club and Councillor Blake Stimpson. After coffee and biscuits, the guests were interviewed by the boys to find out how life in Brackley has changed over the years.

Nikki Taylor, Director of the NBHA Education Project said "It was great to see the boys engaging with local elders and sharing their thoughts and ideas. This project is great as the boys have a voice in all aspects and are learning new skills." Teacher Kirsten Morton said, "It has been wonderful to watch the boys grow in confidence and see new talents emerging. This project proves that effective and worthwhile learning can take place outside the classroom."



Spectacular!

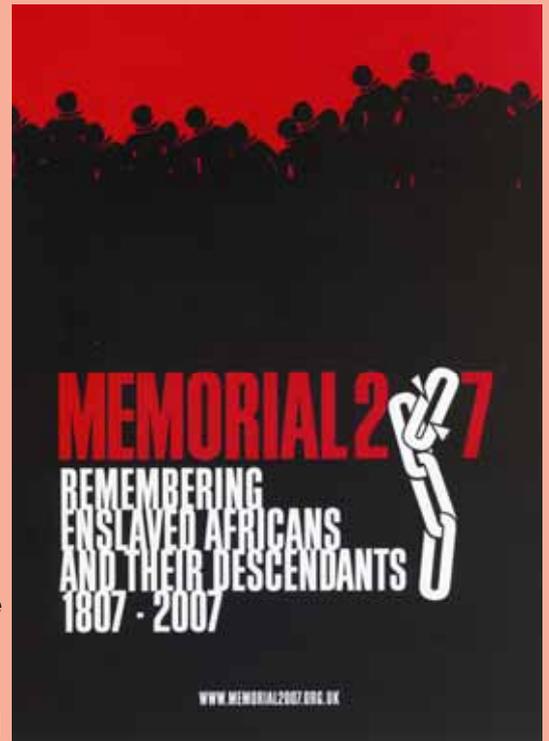


Northampton Carnival was bigger and better than ever this year. The parade circled the town centre in warm sunshine during a weekend of entertainments from 8-10 June. A crowd of thousands lined the route. Highlights included troupes from the Somali Forum, the WACA Saturday School, the Malawi Association and the Doddridge Community Carnival Club. Congratulations to Morcea Walker and her team of organisers, as well as to everyone who took part.

The Memorial 2007 project, endorsed by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, was established to redress the absence of a memorial remembering the contribution of the millions of unnamed enslaved Africans and their descendants to Britain's history past and present.

Sandy Nairne, a Patron and Director of the National Portrait Gallery, commented "Creating a permanent national memorial to commemorate the abolition of the slave trade is of great significance. A creative response in the present will allow all sections of the community to recognise the bravery and extraordinary determination of all those who fought against the greater evil of slavery 200 years ago"

Fellow patron Professor Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, added "I am convinced that we in London and in our country cannot move forward without confronting the facts around the African Slave Trade. I invite you all to support this project and in this way support the healing of our society."



A site approximately 1080sq. metres has been acquired in London's Hyde Park for a memorial garden of remembrance and sculpture.

To ensure this project becomes a reality £1.5 million has to be raised. Please donate to 'Memorial 2007' c/o 5 Springfield Road, Welling, Kent. DA16 1QN and visit www.memorial2007.org.uk

Oku Ekpenyon

Oral History: 'Moving Here'

In the NBHA Autumn 2006 Newsletter, we mentioned the exciting 'Hands on History' project, coordinated by Rachel Silverson of Northampton Museum and Art Gallery and funded by Renaissance East Midlands. Northamptonshire Black History Project interviews have been used as the main focus for the 'Moving Here' part of this project.

Artist Daxa Parmar has designed a vessel, in the form of a globe, which will be used to represent the memories and experiences of six interviewees, moving from their country of origin to Northampton. Daxa's innovative design not only provides a visual feast which represents the countries of Japan, Liberia, Bangladesh, India, Korea and Montserrat, but also includes audio equipment making it possible to listen to the interviewees' voices.

The 'Moving Here' vessel, together with other 'Hands on History' containers will soon be available for use by community groups. **(For further information please contact Rachel Silverson on 01604 837001 or email: rsilverson@northampton.gov.uk)**

- 14 June** **Cultural Passage**, eight workshops on Thursday evenings from 14 June at NWICA, Sheep Street, Northampton (19.00). See p3.
- 7 July** **Wellingborough Carnival**, from The Castle (13.00) to Croyland Park
- 8 July** **Wellingborough Party in the Park**, free music festival (12.00) in Croyland Park
- 12 July** **NBHA Annual General Meeting, Doddridge Centre, 7.00**
Refreshments from 6.30, visiting speaker: everyone is welcome, especially all our members
- 18 August** **ABC Tropical Festival** in Wellingborough
- 8 September** **Freedom From the Past event** at Northampton Guildhall
- 8/9 September** **Quakers Against Slavery exhibition** at Quaker Meeting House, Wellington Street, Northampton
- 13 September** **NBHA Committee Meeting**, Northampton Guildhall
- 29 September** **Black and Asian Studies Association Annual Conference**, Victoria and Albert Museum, London:
NBHA will make a presentation on our work in 2007

NBHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Calling all members and friends of Northamptonshire Black History Association! Please be there on this important occasion to support your Association. You are invited to enjoy refreshments and displays from 6.30 pm onwards, at the Doddridge Centre. Formal business begins at 7.00 pm, with the presentation of our Annual Report and the election of the NBHA Directors and Committee for 2007-08. We are inviting an interesting speaker to tell us about Black History work beyond Northampton: details to be confirmed. AGM invitations and Annual Reports are being sent to all subscribing members.

Membership Renewal: Please help NBHA by renewing promptly (£5 individual membership, £3 concessionary membership, £10 voluntary organisation affiliation, £50 corporate membership). You can renew your membership at the AGM.

New members are always welcome! Only paid-up members can vote at the Annual General Meeting. See NBHA membership form for full details.

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

Website: www.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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