



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Black History
P R O J E C T

Newsletter

December 2004 Volume 2, Issue 4

NEW BLACK HISTORY COURSE IN 2005!

From 10 January 2005, University College Northampton in partnership with Northamptonshire Black History Project are running a new evening course focusing on Britain's Black history (incl. people of African & Asian origin).

Open to everyone interested in finding out more, the course aims to give an insight into the long term and more recent contributions of Black people to the history of Britain. Uniquely, it will also use the fantastic range of resources collected by Northamptonshire Black History Project to bring sessions 'alive' such as oral history interviews, historical documents, and community archives.

Dates and venue

Mondays 6 – 8pm from 10 January until 9 April 2005. It will be held at the Nene Centre for Research, UCN Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton.

Certificate and credits

Everyone who successfully completes the course will be awarded a UCN Certificate worth 10 Level One HE credits.

Fees and facilities

The course fee is £95.00, payable at the start of the course. This fee has been subsidised by a grant from UCN's Widening Participation Scheme. As an enrolled UCN student, you will be entitled to make full use of UCN facilities, including the Library and IT suites.

Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA) Conference on Saturday 9 April

This major national event is included as part of your course fees.

Tutors and visiting speakers

The main tutors will be Julia Bush, History department and Andrew Pilkington, Sociology department at UCN, with several sessions led by visiting/ local speakers. There will also be plenty of opportunity for you to make your own contributions based upon your study or experiences.

To obtain an application form contact: Northamptonshire Black History Project on tel. 01604 590 967 or email: admin@northants-black-history.org.uk.

To find out more contact: Julia Bush at UCN on tel. 01604 722167 or email: julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk.

Research Update

The racist chanting and abuse received by England's Black players at the 'friendly' match with Spain on Wednesday 17 November, bring the purposes of this project into sharp relief. We aim to challenge racist stereotypes and ignorance that surrounds the contributions of Black people to the past, in our case in Northamptonshire, but relevant anywhere in the world.

It is extremely distressing to find that in 100 years (and more) some things have not changed. It was 95 years ago that Walter Tull, one of Britain's early Black footballer players, was targeted by fans with racist abuse, and language described by the *Football Star* as "lower than Billingsgate" , at a match between Tottenham Hotspurs and Bristol City. In recent years campaigns to "Stamp Out Racism" in British football have gathered pace, including a project we are currently involved in with Northampton Town Football Club.

In the *Football, Racism and Cultural Heritage Project*, our staff have been visiting 20 schools in Northampton and sharing the stories of Black historical figures with young people aged 9-12. Young people have openly discussed issues around racism, prejudice and the omission of these people from our history books. Students have welcomed the opportunity to discuss these issues and improve their knowledge of local history. An exhibition of their work will be shown at Northampton Town Football Club (NTFC) on 10 December. To find out more contact Rob Mitchell at NTFC on 01604 757773.

More about Walter Tull

Walter Tull was born at 16 Allendale Street, Folkstone in April 1888. His father was a joiner from St Thomas Parish in Barbados and came to Britain in 1876. He married a local girl from Folkestone in 1880 and together they had six children. In 1897, Walter and his siblings were orphaned when first his mother and then his father died within two years of one another.

In 1898, Walter and his brother Edward were sent to an orphanage in London. After he finished school, he served as an apprentice printer, but in 1908 due to his footballing talent, Clapton Football club (later Leyton Orient) invited him to join them. He later came to the attention of Tottenham Hotspur and made his debut for the club in 1909. He received much praise from the footballing press. However, during a game at Bristol, Walter was targeted with a torrent of racial abuse by a section of the crowd. Thereafter Tottenham played him mainly in the reserve team .

In February 1911 Walter came to the attention of Northampton Town Football Club, when *The Cobblers* were beaten 7-1 by Spurs in a reserve team fixture. The Northampton Football Echo noted that: "*After 11 minutes Tull scored a*

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pretty goal for Tottenham." Walter went on to score a hat trick.

By October 1911 Walter had moved to Albany Road, Northampton, and was to play over 110 games for the Cobblers first team. He later lived in Queen Street, Rushden where he also played for Rushden Town Cricket Club with his friend Eric Tompkins (who played county cricket for Northamptonshire).

In December 1914, Walter became the first Cobblers player to enlist in the First World War. Military rules had initially prevented Black people joining White regiments, but Tull fought on the Western Front in the 17th (1st Football) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. In 1916, Walter was invalided out as a result of trench fever and was sent to Officer Cadet Training School in Scotland, even though Black people were officially excluded from exercising actual command because it was deemed to be bad for discipline.



In May 1917 he became Britain's first Black infantry officer, a 2nd Lieutenant of the 23rd Middlesex (2nd Football).

Walter was sent to Italy where he was mentioned in dispatches for his: "*coolness and gallantry in battle*". By March 1918 he was back in France, where he was killed during the 2nd battle of the Somme near Favrenil in no-man's land.

In 1997 an appeal was launched in Northampton to recognise Walter Tull's achievements, inspired by research undertaken by Phil Vasili and an enthusiastic local fan. In July 1999 a memorial to Walter was finally unveiled at Sixfields the home ground of *The Cobblers*, and the approach road to the stadium renamed *Walter Tull Way*. More recently, the offices of Probation Services in the centre of Northampton have been renamed *Walter Tull House*.

Walter's status as a war hero should also be considered in the context of other un-named Black soldiers who fought for Britain in both World Wars and other battles across the world over hundreds of years.

The Northamptonshire Black History Project would like to see more monuments and plaques marking the presence and contributions of other Black figures in the county. These plaques would present a fantastic opportunity for local residents, school children and tourists to the county to discover the hidden histories of Northamptonshire - perhaps forming part of the proposals for Northampton's Cultural Quarter?

Further Reading:

Vasili, Phil (2000), *Colouring over the White Lines: The History of Black Footballers in Britain*, Mainstream Publishing Company (Edinburgh) Ltd.

Oral History Update

Sadly we are only able to find out about Walter Tull's past through documents, records and photographs - imagine what he could tell us if he were alive now? Luckily for all of us we have been able to talk to another forgotten sporting hero - her story appears on the pages below.

Extracts from an Interview with Anita Neal

By Jenny Labbon, May 2004

Anita Neal was born in Wellingborough in 1950. Her father, an African-American, came to Britain during World War II as a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army. *"I'm not sure exactly where he was from... I don't know whether he was from one of the islands and then moved to the States"* but he met her mother in Wellingborough where they got married. They moved to America for a year, after which Anita's mother returned to Wellingborough while her father travelled between Britain and America to see his children.

Anita grew up in Jubilee Crescent, Wellingborough with her two brothers and two sisters (one of whom is local artist Catherine Arrowsmith), where she enjoyed her childhood. *"I grew up on the estate here and it was a fun place... the neighbours they were all good... I played with the kids. The parents were okay... we all mingled...it was great"*. She went to The Avenue Infants School where she recalls that there were no other Black children although by the time she went to Freeman's Endowed Junior School there were others. Anita did not enjoy her time at Infants and Junior School, but things improved when she started John Lea School and discovered that she had a talent for sport.

"My confidence, my self esteem, and of course because of being able to run it seemed like everybody wanted to know me and love me and put me on a pedestal... and this was wonderful".

At 15, encouraged by her coach, Anita joined the London Olympiads Athletic Club and by 16 became one of the youngest British athletes and an international competitor. *"I went down there and the person who really inspired me was Mary Rand coz she won a gold medal in the 1964 Olympics. And I had to perform in front of her, show her that I could run coz I did line jumping and the 100 metres.... And it all started from there."*



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The recording of Anita Neal's interview, including newspaper cuttings such as those opposite, are available for you to view at Northamptonshire Record Office at Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. Call tel. 01604762129 for opening hours.

BBC Northamptonshire Website

BBC Northamptonshire will shortly mount short extracts taken from some of the interviews that the project has recorded over the past two and a half years on their website.

Celebrating their contributions, you will be able to hear these extracts on the BBC website from 10 January 2005 at: www.bbc.co.uk/northamptonshire



More oral history interviews have been conducted with people below over the past months. They will be available at the Record Office in due course.

- Catherine Arrowsmith
- Superintendent Ray Campbell
- Olivia Chan
- George and Medlin Cleghorn
- Janet Douglas-Hall
- Sheldon Fenning
- Gerald Landsberg
- Councillor Yousef Miah
- Ibrahim Abdulaahi Mohamed
- Bilal Snow-white Lukhele
- Varsha Patel
- Councillor Kallan Simon

Booklets containing summaries of oral history interviews are now available in the county's local libraries and University College Northampton. Full interview transcripts and recordings are available at Northamptonshire Record Office.

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Anita represented Britain in many competitions including the 1968 Mexico Olympics and won two bronze medals in the 1969 European Games. Whilst competing, Anita continued to work for Ideal Clothiers Ltd. *"At the time I was working... and they allowed me to leave off work three o'clock on a Monday and Thursday so I could go to school and train. And that is about as much help as I got."* Anita retired from competitive athletics in her twenties.

An invitation from the management committee

In the last edition of the Newsletter we outlined proposals for future activities which included producing national curriculum resources, publications and performances based on the fantastic resources that the team have brought together over the past two and a half years.

In celebrating our achievements and looking to the future, the management committee is reviewing its position. Whilst we are currently arranged on a project basis we intend to set ourselves up as a sustainable community-led organisation that continues to promote and record Black history in the county over the past 500 years or more.

One of our suggestions is to become an Association but there are a number of other options which we would like to explore. If you are interested in getting involved with this highly successful, innovative, community-led project and to work with us to move forward then we would love to hear from you.

Please contact Carolyn Abel via email: director@northants-black-history.org.uk or tel. 01604 590967 and she will put you in touch with the committee.

We plan to hold an informal General Meeting in February 2005 and everyone is welcome to participate - see details below:

Advice notice of Open General Meeting *Future of Northamptonshire Black History Project*

6.30 pm on Tuesday 8 February 2005

Jeffrey Room

109 St James, Doddridge Centre, Northampton

Delicious food and drink available

25 Years of Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls' Centre

On 26 November 2004, at the Annual General Meeting of Dostiyo Asian Women and Girls' Centre, Jenny Moran of Northamptonshire Record Office officially received a selection of records and documents representing 25 years of Dostiyo's history and contributions to the county.

Over the past months, Black History Project staff (see opposite below) have worked closely with the centre staff to sort, document and record the wealth of material that charts its start in 1979 to the thriving organisation that it has become in 2004.

Celebrations marking this milestone will take place in 2005. To find out more contact Dostiyo Centre on tel. 01604 745340.



Artwork created by girls who meet at the centre (above).



History of five Black community organisations preserved!

The Black History Project has made significant progress in documenting, recording and preserving the records of the county's Black community groups in recent months.

All the records, which include items such as correspondence, photographs and governing documents, help to portray a more inclusive local history that represents the diversity of its local communities and of Britain as a whole.

In addition to Dostiyo, the project has completed sorting the records of Northampton Afro Caribbean Organisation (NACO) which includes documents of umbrella organisation, Northampton Council of African and Caribbean Organisations. We hope these collections will be placed at Northamptonshire Record Office early in the New Year where they are preserved on behalf of the public.

More recently, Wellingborough Black Consortium have placed documents relating to the history of their activities at the Record Office. These are all in addition to the Ghana Union records which became available to the public in May 2004. To find out how you can make sure your organisation is represented in the historical records of Northamptonshire, contact Nicola Taylor on T. 590967.

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
Julia Drake - Oral History Officer
Nicola Taylor - Community Research Officer
Eric Asumang - Administration Officer

Email:

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

Comments, feedback or contributions welcome