



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **Black History** P R O J E C T

Newsletter

June 2005

Volume 3, Issue 2

## Project wins national award!

On 20 April, the project team received an award from the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals (CILIP). The award was given by poet Benjamin Zephaniah who has previously said of the project:

*"The Northamptonshire Black History Project is a great example of what the world needs now. If we leave it to the people in power to write our history we should not complain when we are portrayed negatively, but if we begin to record and write our own history we may then have a clearer vision of our future. I think this project is great; as I go on my travels I shall let the world know that history is being made in Northamptonshire."*



The award usually recognises innovative and exciting work in libraries. This year, it was awarded to our community-led project which is partnered by a number of agencies that includes local Black community groups, the Record Office, University College Northampton, Northamptonshire Libraries and Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. It is a tribute to Northamptonshire Racial Equality Council for continuing to support the project and all those people that have made it happen, including the hundreds of interviewees, volunteers, sessional workers and community advocates. It shows what a common passion can do for bringing people together.

Nigel Thomas, Chair of the judges said, *"This project is a fantastic example of how libraries can partner community-led initiatives and serves as a model which can be replicated in libraries across the country. Northamptonshire's Black History Project is proving how vision and commitment has changed and enhanced the lives of individuals whose history has been forgotten and unacknowledged for years."*



Supported by the  
**Heritage Lottery Fund**

## Project ends ... come to our goodbye party

Despite the award and our many achievements, sadly the project finally comes to an end with no significant sustainable funding in sight. During the past three years we have achieved enormous results, far in excess of expectations and have had an impact in ways that could never have been anticipated. For example, we have:

- interviewed over 200 people and created a substantial oral history archive available at Northamptonshire Record Office
- preserved the archives of 15 Black community groups/ individuals
- documented 700 historical references stretching back 800 yrs
- run or been involved in 5 projects with young people
- given numerous public talks, including professional seminars
- participated in the BBC's People's War initiative
- employed over 40 sessional workers and volunteers, with still more joining the team
- become a case study for the Heritage Lottery Fund
- appeared in the media and press e.g. *The Guardian Society*, *Times Educational Supplement Magazine* (see 10 June issue), *History Today* and soon the Commission for Racial Equality's *Good Relations Guide*



Most important however have been the emotional responses to our work and the learning that has taken place both within and without our organisation. External evaluators of the project's activities have testified to the quality of the work and the passion this project has aroused in people. These are just some of those responses:

*"People have put a lot of themselves into the project, and it is helping to widen their ambitions; it is making a valuable contribution to the whole community, not just Black people."*

*"Doing interviews with older women in my community has opened doors. I now have a different and improved relationship with them because someone showed an interest and so they were willing to talk about all areas of their lives."*

We are now in the closing stages of the project and as such we are ceasing activities and preparing for our exit at the end of August (see page 4 for more). We would like to thank all those people, organisations and funders who have supported this wonderful project to date; if you have not supported us but would still like to then there is still time, but hurry!

**Our end of project party will take place on Friday 22 July at the Doddridge Centre, Northampton. Invitations will be circulated in June - put the date in your diary now and help us celebrate all that we have achieved together!**

It is fitting that our last oral history interview was with Lilian Bader who has decided that this will be her last interview - we feel deeply honoured. It is also fitting in light of current 60th anniversary celebrations of the end of the Second World War and her contributions to the war effort.

Lilian was one of many women who was in the WAAF (Women's Auxillary Air Force) during the Second World War and the first WAAF to be trained as an instrument repairer. Daughter of a Royal Navy seaman from Barbados and English mother, Lilian was bought up in an orphanage when both her parents died. She narrowly escaped being shipped to Australia with other girls in the orphanage because she was Black. In 1944, Lilian left the WAAF when she became pregnant with her first child. She moved with her husband, Ramsey Bader, foster son of Ernest Bader, part of the Scott Bader company based in Woollaston, to Northamptonshire. Ramsey's father was African and fought in the First World War.

Together with her two sons and husband, Lilian lived in Higham Ferrers for 12 years where she recalls being the only Black family in the area. She was also active in the Women's Institute and St Johns Ambulance. After this they moved to Bournemouth. You will be able to listen to the full interview at the Record Office; in the meantime visit [www.mod.uk/wewerethere](http://www.mod.uk/wewerethere) and follow the links.

As part of the BBC's People's War celebrations, we also interviewed some of the elders based at Wellingborough African Caribbean Association about their war-time experiences. These too will be available at the Record Office. The BBC plan more road shows and events throughout the summer so watch out for what's going on in your area.

---

### **More interviews available.....**

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

Bhikubhai Dudhia      Yousef Miah  
Dorothy Freemantle    Saeed Pirzada  
Bilal Lukhele

To contact the Record Office for opening times and directions call: Tel. 01604 762129
--

---

### **Oral History training**

Our highly experienced team are available to conduct oral history training. We can cater for any group, experienced or inexperienced, large or small, young or old, Black or White. It will be invaluable training for any oral history project or individual interviews that you may wish to conduct. For more information and details of prices contact Carolyn Abel on tel. 01604 590 967 or email: [director@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:director@northants-black-history.org.uk).

---

## Moving towards an Association

### From the Shadow Committee

With the HLF-funded project due to close this year, many of us who have been involved with the project, one way or another, have been looking at ways in which we can keep this wonderful work alive and maintain the momentum. It was clear from two community consultation meetings that no-one who has been touched by the project wants this work to end. After debating a range of options it was decided that at the very least we will establish the Northamptonshire Black History Association.

A shadow committee has formed (which will serve until an AGM), a constitution agreed for a voluntary association, so that we are able to move easily in transition from the current project to the new association. In this respect, we will endeavour to:

- Maintain the project website (to be launched in July)
- Maintain a project office or space
- Create publications
- Produce an annual journal and regular newsletters
- Provide curriculum resources for schools, if funding is secured
- Continue historical research and oral history interviews
- Continue to encourage groups to deposit archives at the Record Office
- Hold regular meetings with guest speakers
- Create a membership for individuals and organisations
- Investigate the possibility of a Social Enterprise or trading arm (based upon recommendations of the SEEM-funded consultancy)
- Be responsible for the legacy of the current Northamptonshire Black History Project

Of course, we still aspire to continue our ground-breaking, award winning and innovative approach to the promotion of the history of Black people and communities in Northamptonshire and their contribution to the county and British history. The Project Director, staff and the Management Committee continue to search for funding opportunities and are currently in the process of building new bids, though of course the structure will be different from the present one.

What has been achieved so far has been beyond many of our expectations and we are all agreed on one thing. Whatever the outcome of our funding bids, the work **MUST** and **WILL CONTINUE!**

**If you still want the opportunity to get involved please contact the project office on tel. 01604 590 967. The next Association meeting will take place at 7pm on 9 June at the Doddridge Centre, Northampton.**

Make sure you come to the end of project party and new beginnings for the Association on Friday 22 July - see details on page 2.

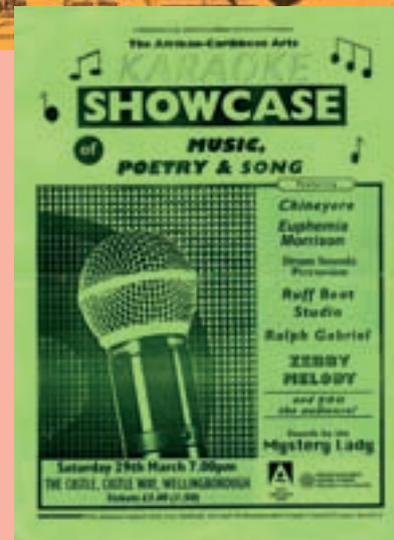
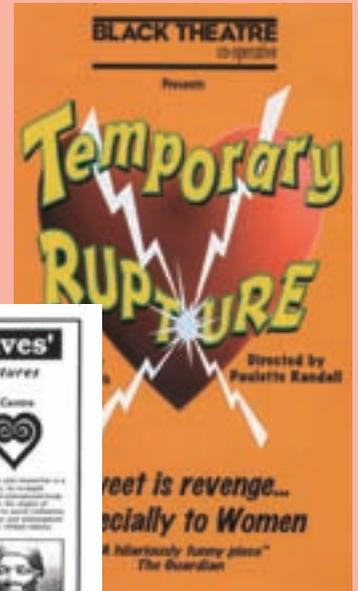
---

2005 represents 10 years of Black History Month in Britain. This year again there will be a fascinating range of events and activities organised across Northamptonshire to celebrate Black achievements and culture.

For groups looking to organise events it may be worth looking at the activities that have been organised by lots of different groups in the past. The Alan Howard Collection, placed at the Local Studies Library in Northampton by the project, is of particular importance. This collection contains programmes, leaflets, posters, newsletters and magazines relating to just some of the arts and cultural activities that have happened in Northamptonshire. Alan has carefully preserved this information which is an invaluable record of past activities. Why not go to the library to have a look at the material?

Alternatively, contact Terry Bracher at the library to find out more on tel. 01604 462040 or email: [tbracher@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:tbracher@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

As mentioned previously, 15 groups in all have placed their archives at the Record Office (or Local Studies Library), with the support of the project. There are also a number of groups who have received advice about preserving their records for future generations. If you would like advice or more information, until 31 August contact Nicola Taylor, Community Research Officer, on tel. 01604 590967. After this date, contact Jenny Moran at the Record Office on tel. 01604 762129 or email: [jmoran@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:jmoran@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



A sample of some of the material preserved by Alan Howard

## Research Update

### **The Mystery of the Well-Dressed Man in Gloves**

By Nicola Taylor, Community Research Officer

During an oral history interview conducted by my colleague Julia Drake last year, Ulric Gravesande recalled that during the late 1950s and early 1960s he regularly saw a very well-dressed Black man who used to walk close to the Racecourse in Northampton each day. Mr Gravesande did not know his name or anything about him, just that he was well-dressed and wore gloves.

Hearing of this reminded me that Don Bates had also talked of seeing a well-dressed Black man walking close to the Racecourse, although he thought the date was much earlier. Like Mr Gravesande, Mr Bates recalled that the man wore gloves, white in summer and black in winter.

Finally, after much searching and having spoken to John and Richard Askew, we appear to have tracked down the identity of this gentleman. The Askews were former students at Eaglehurst College, a private school for boys. The college was situated on East Park Parade overlooking the Racecourse, and the man with the gloves is likely to have been Mr De Louie, a teacher at the school.

Richard and John recalled that Mr De Louie had left Ethiopia in the 1950s amid troubles there, though they were unsure what those troubles were. Both men also remembered that he was well-dressed and wore gloves. We are hoping that the Askews' will be able to locate an old school photograph in which Mr De Louie, might also appear.

And so the mystery of the well-dressed man daily walking by the Racecourse appears to be solved... or is it? Perhaps you have another suggestion for who this man might have been? Call me on 01604 590967 or email: [research@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:research@northants-black-history.org.uk)

---

### **Website and database launch**

Early July sees the launch of our website which will enable anyone to find out more about Northamptonshire's Black history. Working in partnership with Every Generation Media, we are in the final stages of developing the database which will hold information about the oral history interviews, community archives and historical records that we have created and collated over the past 3 years. The database will be available through our website.

So from early July, why not visit us at: [www.northants-black-history.org.uk](http://www.northants-black-history.org.uk) or [www.nbhp.org.uk](http://www.nbhp.org.uk) and tell us what you think.

---

---

## **Black Studies Course to run again!**

Between January and April this year, University College Northampton (UCN), in partnership with the project, ran a successful Black Studies course which focused on Britain's Black history. Led by Julia Bush of UCN and including guest speakers, 14 students were able to use a fantastic array of resources collected by the project to bring sessions 'alive'. Based on positive feedback from students, and demand for such a high quality course, UCN are hoping to run it again from next January. If you missed out last time and are interested in signing up for the course, please contact Julia Bush at UCN on tel. 01604 735500 or email: [julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk). This course was subsidised by UCN's Widening Participation Scheme.

---

## **Schools research in Northamptonshire**

Also, funded by UCN's Widening Participation Scheme, the project partnered UCN's School of Education to commission a School Teacher Consultancy to investigate the needs and opportunities for teaching Black British history in Northamptonshire's schools. Conducted by John Siblon, the report uncovered some interesting results. For example, 74% of teachers do not or rarely teach Black British history; 80% of teachers have no or limited knowledge of the subject and 57% lacked the confidence to teach Black British history, despite overwhelming recognition of the need for it.

The report findings will support a bid for funding to run a project to develop and create national curriculum materials based on the substantial resources created by the project. The project has already secured part of the funding from the County Council's Strategic Grants and is in the process of developing bids for the rest.

To see the full report visit [www.northampton.ac.uk/schools\\_education.php](http://www.northampton.ac.uk/schools_education.php) or contact Carolyn Abel via email: [director@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:director@northants-black-history.org.uk).

---

## **BASA Conference - Putting the 'Black' back in British history: teaching inclusive history in schools**

In partnership with the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), supported by UCN, the project helped to organise a very successful and stimulating conference in early April. Performances by young people, presentations and workshops led to useful discussions about the opportunities and needs for 'putting the 'Black' back' into schools education. One delegate suggested there should be regular workshops on this theme to progress it further. Proceedings of the conference will be available later this summer. In the meantime, you can join BASA by visiting: [www.blackandasianstudies.org.uk](http://www.blackandasianstudies.org.uk)

---

## 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:**

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

## And finally, where can you find us?

### **Until August, the 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.nbhp.org.uk](http://www.nbhp.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](mailto:director@northants-black-history.org.uk)
- [research@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:research@northants-black-history.org.uk)
- [admin@northants-black-history.org.uk](mailto:admin@northants-black-history.org.uk)

**Comments, feedback or contributions welcome**

