



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **Black History** ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

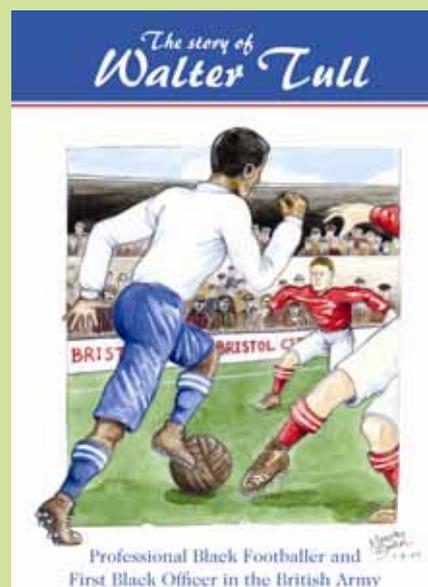
Autumn 2007

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WHAT A YEAR!

The **Shaping the Future** project is due to celebrate its first birthday on 1st October, and what a great year it has been.

Our educational resource packs are fast advancing into print. The first title will be launched in late October. **Walter Tull: Sport, War & Challenging Adversity** will be available **FREE** to teachers in schools across Northamptonshire. Schools from outside the county will also be able to purchase copies. The life story of footballer and soldier Walter Tull provides a basis for learning activities that cover all aspects of the National Curriculum at key stages 1, 2 and 3, with the main focus on history and citizenship. Here is a first glimpse of the story book created by Hilary Claire and talented local illustrator Murray Baillon to accompany the key stage 1 pack.



In May we launched the cookbook *"From Clanger to Coriander"*. This book was the result of our first Community Learning Project, **Food Through the Generations**. A second Community Learning Project, called **Talk to the Page**, takes place in October and November. It was inspired by a focus group meeting with the elders' group based at Wellingborough Afro-Caribbean Centre. Six creative workshops will take place around the county, exploring aspects of Black History and drawing upon NBHA's huge oral history archive. This is an exciting project about language and communication, encouraging elders and young people to come together to share stories, experiences and knowledge.

If you are curious about Black History, creative writing or just looking for a fun thing to do with the children, come along on any of these dates:

Tuesday	23rd October	Wellingborough Afro-Caribbean Centre, Rock Street Wellingborough	2pm - 4pm
Wednesday	24th October	Doddridge Centre, St James Road, Northampton	2pm - 4pm
Thursday	25th October	Lings Forum, Lings Way, Northampton	2pm - 4pm
Saturday	27th October	Daventry Library	2pm - 4pm
Saturday	3rd November	Oundle Library	2pm - 4pm
Saturday	17th November	Towcester Library	2pm - 4pm

Sessions are open to elders and / or adults accompanied by children from 8 years old upwards. For more information contact Anne-Marie Sandos, Community Learning Officer, on 01604 590 967

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WHAT A YEAR... continued

In December 2006, as part of our partnership work with Northampton Museum Service, we organised an enjoyable **Show & Tell Event**. We are holding another such event on **Thursday 4th October** at the Doddridge Centre, St James Road, Northampton from **6:30 to 8pm**. The aim is to give you a chance to handle and examine some of the interesting artefacts from the Museum and from around the world. We are hoping that some of you may be able to reveal a story that accompanies the objects. Light refreshments will be provided.

The second and final year of our project promises to be as exciting as the first. NBHA would like to thank all its supporters who are helping the project to succeed.

Walter Tull – an Illustrator's Perspective

Murray Baillon writes:

When I was approached to produce illustrations for the book to accompany the key stage 1 resource pack about Walter Tull, I was both delighted and really rather intrigued. The initial brief outlined the story of a quite exceptional man, about whom I knew very little, but whose life was full of events that immediately brought images to mind – a wonderful feeling for any illustrator!

Developing these ideas was helped by Hilary Claire's vividly descriptive text, and saw me gathering together images of Walter and his family, as well as many other reference materials. These included such varied images as buildings, clothing, hairstyles of a hundred years ago, and even upholstery fabrics, to make the illustrations as authentic as possible.

After friendly and productive meetings at the NBHA, some sketching and painting (even engaging my ever-helpful family to pose as models), a set of illustrations emerged. Each image captures a moment in time and displays it to the viewer with imagination and colour. I hope they will appeal to the young audience, and their teachers, drawing them into the story and helping them to understand more about Walter Tull and the time in which he lived.

The whole process of working with the NBHA on this project has been a really enjoyable one. Above all, I feel I have discovered much more about a remarkable local hero, and am thrilled to have played a part in the telling of his extraordinary story.

On a very sad note...

We expected Hilary Claire, the author of the Walter Tull story book, to celebrate its forthcoming publication alongside us. However a tragic accident in June led to her death a few days later. Northamptonshire Black History Association sends its deepest condolences to her friends and family. We are grateful to Hilary for sharing her talents with us and know that she would have been delighted with the finished book, the last of her many publications during a lifetime of teaching, writing, researching and campaigning against apartheid in South Africa and for a better, fairer society in Britain.

The second Annual General Meeting of the Northamptonshire Black History Association took place on Thursday 12th July at the Doddridge Centre, Northampton. Ruchira Leisten (Chair) welcomed members and attenders, reminding us of the past year's considerable achievements as well as thanking everyone for their support. Julia Bush (Secretary), Nikki Taylor (Education Project Director) and Terry Bracher (Treasurer) then summarised key aspects of the NBHA Annual Report for 2006-07. Harish Thakrar was thanked for his services in auditing the annual accounts, which were unanimously approved by the membership.



Mary Clarke (Doddridge Centre) presided as Chair during the elections for the NBHA Directors and Committee.

Directors: Ruchira Leisten, Monica Babb, Donna Palmer-Smith, Bobb Lewis, Terry Bracher, Julia Bush, Linda Hoddle, Nicola Taylor, Jenny Labbon, Paul Bracey, Marjorie Morgan

Additional Committee members: Morcea Walker, Angela Ghavami, Anne-Marie Sandos, Janet Douglas-Hall

Ruchira Leisten was re-appointed as Chair, and Harish Thakrar as Auditor. The election of remaining officers and the formation of sub-committees will take place at the first meeting of the new Committee (13 September, 6.30pm, Guildhall, Northampton). After the AGM there was a very interesting presentation by Izzy Mohammed from the Birmingham Project 'Connecting Histories', followed by a lively discussion.

Emancipation Day Celebrations

The Freedom from the Past project came to its climax with an Emancipation Day celebration event on the 1st August. This event started with a small group of individuals on a *Walk for Freedom* from outside BBC Radio Northampton to the headquarters of the Northampton West Indian Community Association. Music laced the well-attended event with an ambience provided by Mark Dean of Inspiration FM. Pastor Donovan Allen opened the gathering by welcoming the seated audience, made up of all ages. He talked of the struggle for freedom and paid tribute to the many lives lost in slave rebellions across the Caribbean. Linking the 200th Anniversary of the 1807 Abolition Act to Emancipation, he then introduced Donna Palmer-Smith. She spoke about how Emancipation Day came into being, explaining that it began as a celebration of freedom from slavery in the Caribbean and USA, where it is normally celebrated on August 1st.

Norma Pearson of English Heritage then described the history of the Freedom from the Past project, and the significant work done to bring it through to fruition. David Wiseman gave an insightful launch to the 'Freedom from the Past: A Long Time Coming' DVD, which recorded the 25 March commemoration events in Northampton. All those attending were given a free copy of the DVD to take away. David Wiseman's closing words reminded us all of the hard work everyone had contributed, with special thanks to Mary Clarke who coordinated the whole project together. After the speeches the audience were able to enjoy the rest of the evening by socialising and tucking into a delicious buffet with a taste of the Caribbean and India whilst soaking up the music.

Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Celebrate or Commemorate?

Jenny Moran writes:

A group of students from Kingsthorpe Community College have been experiencing politics and history first hand as part of a project to investigate slavery in the past and present. The *Sticks and Stones Project*, led by Northamptonshire Records Office and Northamptonshire Black History Association, is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It aims to make a short film and an exhibition to highlight issues important to the young people involved.

The students, aged 14-16, recently visited the Houses of Parliament, scene of many abolitionist campaigns and debates about the transatlantic slave trade. They have



been learning about the history and legacy of slavery and the slave trade and were surprised to find that both continued long after the supposed abolition. The Black History Association has supplied information about the Black presence in Northamptonshire and highlighted the fact that many people came to Britain through slavery.

As well as exploring the history of slavery, the students wanted to find out more about modern slavery such as sweatshop labour and human trafficking. They felt that apologising for the slave trade is not enough: more needs

to be done to combat slavery today. The group met Sally Keeble MP for Northampton North at the House of Commons. She agreed that slavery still exists today and talked about some of the cases she had seen at first hand in her political work. Sally thought the students showed excellent knowledge and perception and said "I was really impressed with the group and it was a real pleasure to be involved".

Quakers Against Slavery

Northampton's commemoration of the Slave Trade Abolition Bicentenary continued with an exhibition at the Quaker Meeting House on 8-9 September. Organised by the Quakers and supported by NBHA, the exhibition presented Abolition in a broad historical context as well as revealing new research on the support which local Quakers gave to the campaign. Among the exhibits was a letter from the famous abolitionist Olaudah Equiano to the Quakers, thanking them for their support. Equiano had bought his own freedom from a Quaker 'master' in Monserrat, but by the 1780s British Quakers were taking a leading part in the anti-slavery campaign.

2007 is a remarkable year for Black History anniversaries. Alongside Slave Trade Abolition, we remember the 150th anniversary of the 1857 Indian Uprising and the 60th anniversary of Indian and Pakistani independence. On 14-15 August 1947 two independent nations were born out of decades of struggle, and amid the sorrows of partition. More than a million people died as around five million Hindus and four million Muslims travelled to new homes in India and Pakistan. These events are not forgotten, as British Indians and Pakistanis celebrate their countries' achievements.



India Independence, © Getty Images

NBHA members and local community leaders made a range of comments on the Independence anniversary.

Mr Jayant Patel, of the Patel Somaj Hindu association, felt that India has 'learnt something over the past 60

years': this is evident in tremendous economic progress and especially the progress in education, tourism and travel. As for British Indians – 'this is our country as well' – and we should remember Indians' role in the armed forces in wartime and since. Indian cultural influences on Britain are strong, including the impact of Bollywood and even of the Big Brother racism row which 'made a difference'. Young people need to learn their history, and at the youth club the Indian national anthem is sung (in English), alongside lessons in the Gujerati language.

Mr Safraz Khan, of the Islamic Pakistani Community Centre, commented that Independence is celebrated at a ceremonial event every 14 August in Northampton. Pakistan's achievements include 'having an independent state and surviving', though there are still many problems including limited education and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. There are fears of religious extremism in Pakistan, but peace is 'very necessary' for the future. British Pakistanis have played an important part in British industry, and in the transport and food sectors, as well as providing 'human capital' as doctors and engineers. They are also taking on political leadership roles, with several in Parliament and many Mayors and councillors. Young people in Northampton sometimes know little history, but Urdu classes are popular and include study of a book on the creation of Pakistan.

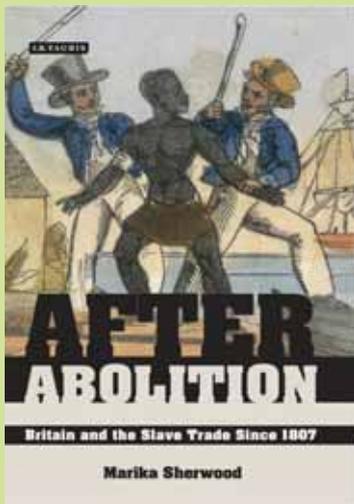
NBHA members include some from Muslim and Hindu families whose lives were deeply affected by Indian partition. **Wajiha Mohammad** reports that her late grandparents 'never saw their own parents and siblings ever again as in the city of Paniphat the Sikhs slew many Muslims and forced the rest out to Lahore (now in Pakistan)'. As the youngest children, they remained in their Indian village with other family members. Wajiha's family now take pride in Indian achievements, including economic strength, sporting achievements and cultural influence around the world: 'Indians culturally enrich British society'.

Ruchira Leisten's Hindu parents both left the country which is now Bangladesh in order to live and work in India. Her father recalled the growth of 'bad feelings among neighbours and friends', and the end of a 'free and easy childhood life' when he often played with Muslim boys. The move to Calcutta meant leaving behind many family ties and memories, and eventually he followed a brother to work in the British embassy in Iraq. Ruchira feels that young people should know about family history and about Indian independence. Her sons watched some of the recent television programmes, and would like to visit India before too long.

Britain Profiting after Abolition

Donna Palmer-Smith writes:

After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807, by Marika Sherwood (I.B Tauris 2007, £19.50), is a must for everyone interested in the history of slavery, and the wealth



Britain made after the government announced Abolition. What is different about this book, is that it furnishes some detailed incriminating evidence of prominent individuals, companies, Members of Parliament, slave traders, merchants and bankers who made vast amounts of profits through their involvement in the illegal trade.

Marika uncovers how British government reluctantly used the rhetoric of the law as a front, without enforcement, and then flagrantly broke their own laws by continuing to trade. She identifies businesses and individuals that were directly or indirectly profiting from the trade which was the financial backbone of the British Empire. She exposes how Parliament continually argued to maintain slave trading, showing the prevalent law-breaking without repercussion or consequence. This made a mockery of the law: with an insatiable appetite for wealth, Parliament continued regardless.

The book is written directly and clearly, and raises many unanswered questions. It captures the hypocritical attitude of the British government, Parliament and ruling classes, all the time questioning the attitudes of the British people. Marika notes and questions the attitudes and split in public opinion over Abolition, wrapped up in complications of racial hierarchy, and all superseded by the thirst for profit.

Marika's enlightening book surprised me with details of Prime Minister William Gladstone's family involvement in the trade and cast a different light on Wilberforce's character. To discover more revealing facts you will have to read the book.

Chris Pounds writes:

Charles Bradlaugh was Member of Parliament for Northampton from 1880 until his death in 1891. He is remembered as a leading freethinker and Republican, and he championed many other progressive causes such as votes for women, land reform, trade unionism and family planning.



In 1888 he was approached by the leaders of the Indian National Congress to promote their movement in Parliament. On 21st August a public meeting was held at the Guildhall to gain the approval of his constituents. Two prominent Indians, Dadabhai Naroroji and WC Bangereee, told of the plight of their 200 – 300 million fellow citizens, exploited and disenfranchised. Bradlaugh explained that he was aware of their suffering and would like to become their voice in 'the mother of Parliaments'. Conscious that this would limit his time available for Northampton, the people said they would gladly make this sacrifice, and Bradlaugh was nobly consecrated "Member for India" .



At the next Parliamentary session Bradlaugh highlighted the extent of famine in Ganjam Province. He showed that since 1878 a special annual tax of £1,500,000 had been levied 'for the purpose of providing...insurance against famine and for no other purpose whatsoever'. Over the years this money had been spent on 'war and annexation and the erection of costly buildings at Simla...while the people of India have been starving.'(1) He complained that there were too few native representatives on provincial councils, and that there should be a Parliamentary Committee to study Indian questions. Over the following months he continued diligently to 'approach every question as the Indians themselves would.' (2)

Overwork led to serious illness and in late 1889 he was advised to escape the English winter. He took up an invitation to attend the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in December where he was welcomed with 'rapturous enthusiasm'. Bradlaugh's health continued to decline and he died prematurely in January 1891. More than 3,000 friends and supporters attended his funeral in Surrey, including a large contingent from Northampton and, as Mahatma Gandhi commented, 'every Indian residing in London'. (3)

The panel on Charles Bradlaugh's statue in Abington Square is inscribed: '**India, Too, Chose Him Her Representative.**'

1.Speech in the Commons, 27 August 1889. It was claimed Bradlaugh's intervention saved 'lakhs of human lives'. Address to Bradlaugh by the Banares Association, December 1889. 1 lakh equals 100,000.

2.President Charles Bradlaugh' (biography) David Tribe 1971.

3.The Story of My Experiment with Truth. Chapter XX. Mahatma Gandhi.

Please come along to the 6th Annual Charles Bradlaugh Commemoration, Sunday 23rd September, commencing at 3 pm by the statue of Bradlaugh, Abington Square, Northampton. For more information tel. 01604 715793.

13 September	6.30pm, NBHA Committee , Northampton Guildhall
29 September	Black and Asian Studies Association Annual Conference in London, with NBHA presentation (contact NBHA office for details)
2 October	6.00pm, Introduction to 10-week Black British History course , University of Northampton (contact NBHA office for details)
4 October	6.30pm, Show and Tell Museum Event , Doddridge Centre (see page 2)
5 October	1pm, NBHA public presentation at the Alfred East Art Gallery, Kettering
23, 24, 25, 27 October and 3, 17 November	2-4pm, Talk to the Page community learning events in Wellingborough, Northampton, Daventry, Oundle and Towcester
27 October	Northamptonshire Black Police Association 12th Annual Charity Dinner and Dance, £35 (details from Ron Frater 07909 912648)
29 October - 4 November	Equality & Diversity/One World Week 2007 (details from Paul Crofts at equality@northampton.ac.uk or phone 01604 893887)
1 November	6.30pm, NBHA Committee , Northampton Guildhall
13 December	6.30pm, NBHA Committee , Northampton Guildhall

Also – watch out for your invitation to the Walter Tull launch event, coming soon!

STOP PRESS: NBHA VISIT TO EQUIANO EXHIBITION IN BIRMINGHAM ON SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER 2007

This exhibition is one of the highlights of the Bicentenary Year. As the climax of a year-long project about the greatest Black British Abolitionist, it promises to be an unmissable experience. We have booked a coach to leave the University (Park Campus) at 10.00am. We will leave Birmingham for the return journey at 3.30pm, after the exhibition visit and a lunchtime stroll round the city centre.

BOOK NOW: £8 adults, £6 children and concessions (advance booking essential, from the NBHA office, Doddridge Centre, 01604 590967)

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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