



# NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **Black History** ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Spring 2008

Volume 6, Issue 1

## Walter Tull Packs Launched



On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007, Northamptonshire Black History Association, as part of its Heritage Lottery Funded education project, Shaping the Future, proudly launched the first title in a series of five educational resource packs for schools.

**Walter Tull: Sport, War and Challenging Adversity** uses the life story of Walter Tull to develop a thematic pack that can be used by teachers in primary and secondary schools. Three packs have been produced, for the Key Stage 1 and 3 History Curriculum and a cross curricular scheme of work for Key Stages 2 and 3.

Prior to the launch, Director Nikki Taylor and journalists from BBC Radio Northampton visited a school in Corby to see the packs in action. Teacher Angie Alloway from Studfall Junior School was given a copy of the KS1 pack for use in her Year 3 class.

Nikki said, "After months of work it is wonderful to see these resources being used in a classroom setting. Most importantly it is great to see the students enjoying and engaging with the work."

Angie said, "The really lovely thing about doing something like this with these children is that it is actual people who have lived in Northamptonshire that are relevant to them...The packs have all the resources, which is great for teachers." Angie also described how the packs made use of various learning styles and were great at allowing students to become 'hands on'.

The launch took place at Northampton Town Football Club and guest speakers included Tony Clarke, NTFC General Manager, and Phil Vasili, author of **Colouring Over the White Line: The History of Black British Footballers**. Tony and other members of Northampton Town Football and Supporters Club have been instrumental in ensuring that the story of Walter Tull is more widely known and were happy that these new educational resources were being launched at the stadium on Walter Tull Way. Students from Kingsthorpe College and The Academy performed short drama pieces about the life of Walter Tull. A special message from Edward Finlayson, Walter Tull's great nephew, was also read out during the event

After the launch the packs were sent free to every school in the county and are now in use in schools. Studfall Junior School have used the packs and the accompanying story books as part of their literacy week. Weston Favell Primary aimed to use them as a whole-school project looking at local history.

If you are a teacher and have a story about how the packs are being used in your school, please contact Nikki Taylor, 01604 590 967.

# River of Life: Performance Project

Did you know that a Hawaiian princess came to the county to be educated? Or that a Black butler employed by the Montagu family was a classical composer?



As part of our third HLF funded community learning project, people from Corby, Oundle and Northampton have been exploring some of these hidden gems of Northamptonshire's History.

Anne-Marie Sandos, Community Learning Officer, explains: "With this final project we wanted to engage with communities that do not immediately identify with Black History. While I was researching how to deliver the project I

became aware of Corby Zone's work exploring women's history in the local area. I also made a link with Oundle Literature Festival who are really keen to develop something as part of their festival programme. So the idea of developing a performance which explores the lives of historical characters was born."

Participant Betty McPherson says:

"The whole story seems interesting. I remember meeting my first Black man when I was a girl. I was expecting an African but when he opened his mouth he spoke with a broad Glaswegian accent."

There has been many a heated debate. Participants have learnt about some of the Black people who lived in and visited Northamptonshire as they shared their own experiences and developed their performance skills. It has been a rollercoaster ride as we are trying to achieve a lot in a short space of time and it has taken many of us out of our comfort zones, but that is all part of the fun of a challenge. The performance includes acting, dance and readings from literature with local links.

Participant and NBHA management committee member Monica Babb says:

"I love folklore. Anything that involves storytelling gets my attention and to bring Black History to the towns of Northamptonshire is a good thing. There is real diversity in the group. We've got Welsh, Scottish, Jamaican, Barbadian and English."

The culmination of this project will be two performances:

- **Tuesday 4 March 2008– 7.30pm** at Queen Victoria Hall in Oundle as part of the Oundle Literature Festival.
- **Monday 10 March 2008– 7.30pm** at The Arc, Rockingham Primary, Rockingham Road, Corby, NN17 1AJ.

All enquiries to Northamptonshire Black History Association 01604 590967

**Tickets cost £3.** There are 20 free tickets for each performance available to Northamptonshire Black History Association members.

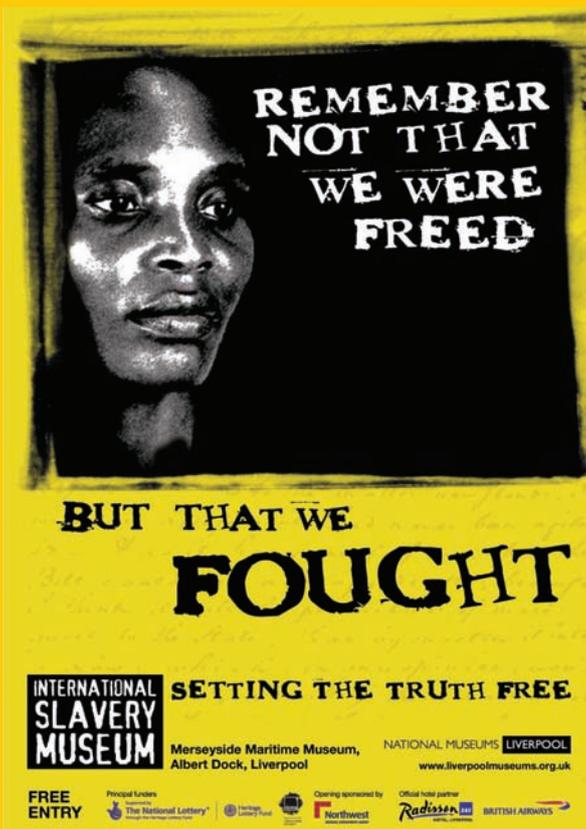
---

Over forty bright-eyed and expectant travellers boarded the coach to Liverpool early morning on Saturday 23 February 2008. All were excited to see the newly opened International Slavery Museum based at the Liverpool Maritime Museum complex. Previously the Transatlantic Slavery Gallery, the museum has been revamped to commemorate the 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade. The museum includes sections on life in Africa before enslavement, the triangular trade between Europe, Africa and the Caribbean, life for enslaved people and the legacy of the slave trade.



International Slavery Museum © Lee Garland

We were greeted with a brief talk from Carol White, the Senior Learning Officer, before going to explore the museum. The museum includes powerfully moving audio visual displays as well as fascinating objects and interactives. Recently nominated for the Art Fund Prize (formerly the Gulbenkian Award) which recognises excellence and innovation in museum display and interpretation, the experience was a mine of information.



A visitor commented: "For me it was very emotional. The slavery bit made me feel angry what people were put through for profit. The exhibition itself was well thought out and put together. It is essential to know these things but very difficult to see."

One of our young visitors commented: "...the African art and homes were really cool. The chairs in the Igbo House were awesome. It was different to the conditions they lived in during slavery which was quite bad."

After the museum we spent the afternoon exploring the Albert Dock and the city. There is a real buzz in the air as Liverpool is the European City of Culture 2008. Some stayed on the Albert Dock and explored Tate Liverpool with its interesting collections of modern art. Other visitors went to find out more about Liverpool's largest cultural export at The Beatles Experience. Some of the more intrepid visitors made their

way into the city to explore some of the other museums and the shops.

The trip gave us a unique opportunity to visit this city at a really exciting time and it is a trip that people will remember for a long time to come.

## Journey Back in Time Again

In our last Newsletter we published a report on our exciting and privileged visit to the Equiano exhibition on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007 at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. The article featured comments made by some of the young people who were on the trip including those from the Wellingborough Afro Caribbean Association's Saturday School.

Reflecting on our visit, we wanted to continue the theme of young people's experience and perspective on the exhibition. Donna Palmer-Smith spoke to one of our young members, 13 year-old Mark Leisten, about his impressions.



**How much do you think you have learnt from the exhibition?**

A lot, about his life, his freedom and where he was from.

**What did you enjoy most?**

I was interested in reading his story on the information blocks.

**Looking at Equiano's life story, what would you say about his experiences, and him as a person?**

He had idealist experiences like meeting Nelson; he also saw bad stuff, sick stuff, like his friends dying of starvation and being raped on board the ship. As a person he was clever, he wrote books, spoke many different languages and was strong and brave, he didn't give up; he's like a saviour to Black men, women and children.

*Painting by Mark Leisten*

Finding out that Equiano, a Black man in 1773, was in a position to take an expedition to the North Pole, rubbing shoulders with the Battle of Trafalgar's Horatio Nelson, was a discovery in itself for many of us as well as Mark.

The exhibition is a celebration of the extraordinary life of Olaudah Equiano, known in life as Gustavus Vassa, who lived between 1745-1797. Depicting aspects of his life story from his book, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, the exhibition afforded us a glimpse into the harrowing experience of an overcrowded slave hold and the squeezing into a tiny space which grown men, women and children endured for the journey. The exhibition is available for bookings and will be touring the UK, see [www.equiano.org](http://www.equiano.org) for further dates or bookings.

---

# Creative Projects with Young People



Race 2 Score  
Media Project



Let's Celebrate



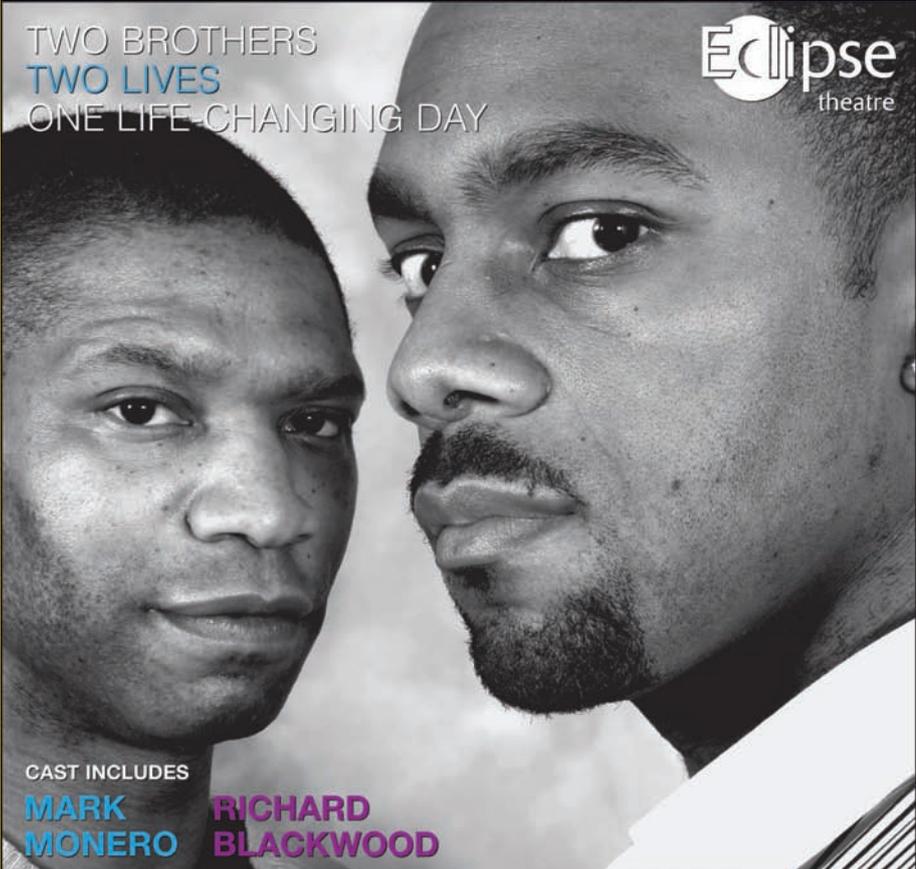
## Remembering Walter Tull

February 2008 saw the start of a campaign to get Walter Tull awarded the Military Cross for bravery. Walter Tull came to Northampton to play for the Cobblers around 1911. He was one of the first Cobblers player to enlist for service in the First World War, where he fought as part of the Footballers Division of the Middlesex Regiment. He was praised for his leadership qualities and good sense in battle and was sent for officers' training. This was at a time when Black people were not allowed to hold officer rank. Walter Tull was sent back to the front and was praised for his courage in battle. Major General Sir Sydney Lawford, commanding officer, wrote in a report:

"I wish to place on record my appreciation of your [Walter Tull's] gallantry and coolness. You were the first to cross the river prior to the raid and during the raid you took the covering party of the main body across and brought them back without a casualty, in spite of heavy fire."

Walter Tull was recommended for a Military Cross for this action. He was not given the medal due to the army's rules on race which they broke in order to make him an officer. He fell in battle without receiving his award. The medal is awarded to officers for 'gallantry during active operations against the enemy' and is not normally awarded posthumously. NBHA, Phil Vasili and people inspired by Walter Tull's story are mounting a campaign to get his bravery and sacrifice as Britain's first Black officer recognised.

To sign the petition, look on our website [www.northants-black-history.org.uk](http://www.northants-black-history.org.uk) or call 01604 590967.



TWO BROTHERS  
TWO LIVES  
ONE LIFE-CHANGING DAY

Eclipse  
theatre

Eclipse Theatre presents  
WORLD PREMIERE  
**ANGEL  
HOUSE**

By award-winning playwright  
ROY WILLIAMS  
Directed by Paulette Randall  
Designed by Libby Watson

CAST INCLUDES  
**MARK  
MONERO** **RICHARD  
BLACKWOOD**

ROYAL  
DERNGATE &  
TUE 1 – SAT 5 APRIL  
BOX OFFICE 01604 624811  
[www.royalalndderngate.co.uk](http://www.royalalndderngate.co.uk)

ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

**Rachel Silverson**, Community History Officer with Northampton Museums reports:

Northamptonshire Black History Association has worked in collaboration with Northampton Museum and Art Gallery to create three loans boxes containing items from the museum's ethnographic collections.

The boxes were created using Heritage Lottery funding as part of the NBHA's Shaping the Future Project, which aims to challenge racism through education and learning. One part of the project involves NBHA working in partnership with Northampton Museum and Art Gallery to develop the integration of Black British History into the collections and interpretation of the museum.

This will take the form of a range of learning resources targeted for schools and other visiting groups. The ethnography boxes will be used in conjunction with a resource pack titled **Representations of Empire**, which will provide school children studying at Key Stages 2 and 3 with different perspectives and views of the world. The schemes of work are cross-curricular with a special emphasis on History and Geography.

It is hoped that this initiative will enable Northampton Museums Service to widen access to their ethnographic collections. The material held at Northampton museum was acquired by the museum mainly by donation between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The objects come from a wide geographical spread – Asia, Oceania, Australia, Africa, North and South America and a few pieces from distinct ethnic groups within Europe. The larger part of the collection comes from Africa.



The diversity of these objects is a positive aspect of the collection, and it provides good cross cultural themes and knowledge of related themes, such as missionaries, Opium Wars, Benin, Slavery, the Scramble for Africa, Life in the Empire, Trade and Tourism, Craft and Collectors.

For more information on this project, please contact Northamptonshire Black History Association: 01604 590967

---

## **FREE PUBLIC LECTURE: Tuesday 13 May, 6.00pm, University of Northampton, Park Campus**

Dr Hakim Adi will speak on 'Africans and the Slave Trade: before, during and after European involvement'. Everyone is welcome to this special lecture by a leading expert in Black History (Chair of the Black and Asian Studies Association).

---

<b>4 March 2008</b>	<b>River of Life:</b> Everyday Heroes from Northamptonshire's Black History, 7.30pm. Call Oundle tourist office 01832 274333
<b>10 March 2008</b>	<b>River of Life:</b> Everyday Heroes from Northamptonshire's Black History, 7.30pm. Call Rocky Road Records 01536 203810
<b>20 March 2008</b>	<b>NBHA Management Committee:</b> Northampton Guildhall 6.30pm
<b>26 March 2008</b>	<b>Representations of Empire: Launch of Loans Boxes.</b> Join NBHA and Northampton Museum and Art Gallery for the launch of the new educational resource loan boxes for Key Stages 2 and 3. Abington Park Museum 4-6pm
<b>1 May 2008</b>	<b>NBHA Management Committee:</b> Northampton Guildhall 6.30pm
<b>13 May 2008</b>	<b>Public Lecture by Hakim Adi: Africans and the Slave Trade,</b> University of Northampton, Park Campus, 6.00pm
<b>12 June 2008</b>	<b>NBHA Management Committee:</b> Northampton Guildhall 6.30pm
<b>14 June 2008</b>	<b>Northampton Carnival</b>
<b>12 July 2008</b>	<b>BASA Conference: Making the Most of it– Black History and British Education,</b> University of Northampton, Park Campus
<b>17 July 2008</b>	<b>NBHA Annual General Meeting</b>

## Aspects of African History: new evening course!

A new course in African History will be launched at the University of Northampton on **8 April 2008**. Running for ten Tuesday evenings, the course includes a wide range of topics and several visiting speakers. Here is your chance to find out more about **Egypt in Africa, the West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay, Africa's role in the histories of Christianity and Islam, Africans and the slave trade, European colonisation and its aftermath, and Africa's links to the African diaspora**. This course is run in partnership with NBHA, and you will be encouraged to explore the big issues around **Africa's importance in World History**. We want to challenge the neglect of African History in most British schools and universities, by opening up the wealth of knowledge and resources now available through books, museums and the internet.

Classes are on **Tuesdays from 6-8pm at the University's Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton**. For application forms and further details, please contact [julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:julia.bush@northampton.ac.uk) or phone the NBHA office on 01604 590967.

Subsidised course fee: £50.

### 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](mailto:admin@northants-black-history.org.uk)

Website: [www.northants-black-history.org.uk](http://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!**



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

