

WOLVERHAMPTON



2014

BLACK HISTORY MONTH
OCTOBER 2014

Poem -
**Worn by the
 Messenger to
 Humanity**

These stripes,
 Sat down for Human Rights,
 When Sister Rosa Parks
 On the bus defied.

These stripes.
 Survived the transatlantic,
 Slave ships covered genocide.

These stripes.
 Clothed the Brothers and Sisters
 Who were victims
 Of Europe's concentration camps.

These Stripes
 Will stand the test of time.
 As they are planted in our mind.

Their stripes,
 Highlight your earthly light.
 That now shines celestial,
 For all mankind to remember
 You eternally.

Stephen.
 At every sunrise.

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This year's Black History Month programme is sponsored by the University of Wolverhampton. We also acknowledge the support provided to the Black History Month Events Group this year, by the following organisations:



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Welcome to the 14th edition of the **Black History Month** programme.

Black History Month plays an important part in bringing people of all cultures together to move collectively towards our vision, by giving people in our community the opportunity to explore and learn more about Black history and culture, more importantly the roles and contributions Black people have made in shaping the history of this country, which is often overlooked.

Black History Month has inspired other cultures and communities in Britain and around the world to follow suit. Today in the USA there is also Filipino American History Month, Irish-American Heritage Month, Puerto Rican Heritage Month, National Tibetan American Heritage Month, Jewish American Heritage Month and South Asian History Month. In Britain we have Gypsy and Travelers History Month, LGBT History Month and Anglo Sikh Heritage Week.

The events in this programme are educational and entertaining, and are open to the general public unless specified. It is hoped that these events will promote initiatives to encourage racial harmony and respect of the diverse cultures and skills amongst people in the community in Wolverhampton. Do support these events by encouraging your partner, friends, relatives and people living outside Wolverhampton to come along and join in these celebrations.



Foreword by Professor Geoff Layer, Vice Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton



I am delighted to introduce you to the Black History Month programme for 2014, which gives a flavour of the new Wolverhampton black history website at www.blackhistoryandheritage.com.

The new website, to be launched in October is featured in the first listing. It will enable the Wolverhampton Black history month partners to bring together the wealth of local heritage and cultural materials on black history in a way that is accessible to the local communities we serve and people worldwide.

As the University of Opportunity, we acknowledge that people access information and learn in different ways and hope that we succeed in whetting your appetite to learn more about black history, whether this is through the website, this programme or attending one of the many events scheduled for October.

This year our focus is on highlighting the contributions made by people from Black and Ethnic Minority groups to the British Armed Forces during the First World War. In addition we offer educational and awareness raising events that continue to form the foundations of Black History Month celebrated in October.

I would like to say thank you on behalf of the coordinating partners to those who work extremely hard to develop and make available black history resources and events.

The Black History Month Events Group

The Black History Month Events Group brings together organisers of activities during Black History Month and those who promote Black History all year round. The aims of the Black History Month Events Group are to:

- Promote universal knowledge of Black African History, Culture and Heritage.
- Disseminate information on positive Black contributions to British Society and the wider world.
- Heighten the confidence and awareness of Black people to their cultural heritage.
- Promote cultural diversity across all communities in Wolverhampton.

We appreciate the time and effort people from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors have put into organising events for Black History Month and in producing this programme.



The Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project

The Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project (BLHCAP) collects and manages an archive on BME communities in Wolverhampton. The archive is generally referred to as the 'Cultural Archives Collection'.

The archives collection span a period of seven decades and comprise a wide variety of ephemera reflecting the history of the presence of Black and South Asian peoples in Wolverhampton. Materials include newspaper articles, letterheads, documents from voluntary organisations, photographs, letters and oral recordings.

We hold a small but growing collection of over 50 objects ranging from socially historic items to more contemporary items, which reflect the rich diversity of expression by and about the people of the African Diaspora. Much of the collection was acquired by BLHCAP members. Some items were donations from the public.

A variety of the materials from the archive and artefact collections have been used to support our educational and outreach work.

The current content of the archive reflects BLHCAP's history as a local volunteer led grassroots organisation which sought to collect and preserve material encompassing the range of experiences of African and African-Caribbean people and their descendents. We are filling a gap left void by statutory sector archives. As our collection continues to grow, BLHCAP will remain true to documenting this breadth of experience, whilst refining its focus to concentrate on preserving materials from the 20th century through to contemporary times

Volunteers are needed to research some of the objects from the history collection in greater detail, catalogue the artefacts and increase our knowledge about the collection. Tasks include:

- Photographing
- Recording detailed information on catalogue cards
- Researching the artefacts or the makers/donors information
- Creating object files with extended information
- Entering information on computer

If you want to participate in the work of BLHCAP please contact BLHCAP on 07806461828, email: blacklocalhistory@live.co.uk

Are you looking for funding for a heritage project?

heritage
lottery fund

Your group could apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of £3,000 or over. We support all kinds of heritage projects, such as:

- celebrating your community's history
- commemorating anniversaries
- collecting people's memories

To find out more come to one of our free monthly workshops in Birmingham. Contact Catherine to book. Call **0121 616 6882** or email catherine.kemp@hlf.org.uk

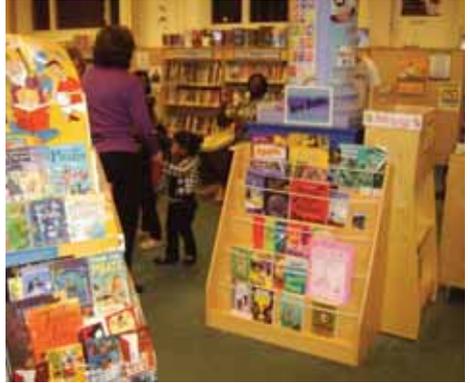


www.hlf.org.uk/WestMidlands

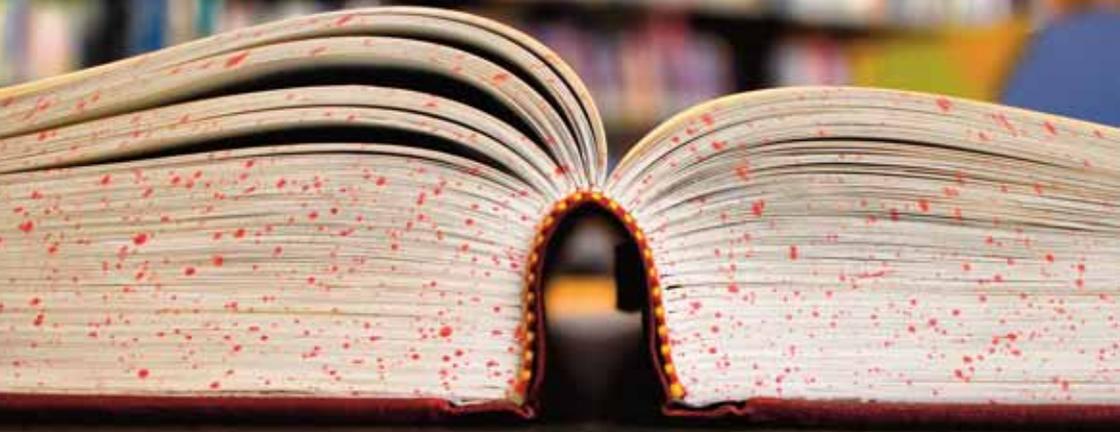
Awarding funds from
The National Lottery®

Black History Month at Wolverhampton Libraries

Wolverhampton libraries mark Black History Month every year by promoting books on Black history and culture, as well novels written by Black authors. Contact your local librarian about Black History Month book displays, and pop into your library to view the Black History Month books section.



Time:	Opening times vary across libraries
Cost:	Free
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes



For further information contact:-

Ashmore Park Library

E-mail: ashmorepark.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556296

Bilston Library

E-mail: bilston.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556253

Blakenhall Library

E-mail: blakenhall.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 555460

Collingwood Library

E-mail: libraries@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 552025

Long Knowle Library

E-mail: longknowle.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556290

Low Hill Library

E-mail: lowhill.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556293

Pendeford Library

E-mail: pendeford.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556250

Penn Library

E-mail: penn.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556281

Springvale Library

E-mail: springvale.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556284

Tettenhall Library

E-mail: tettenhall.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556308

Warstones Library

E-mail: warstones.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556275

Wednesfield Library

E-mail: wednesfield.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556278

Whitmore Reans

E-mail: whitmorereans.library@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 556269

Central Library

E-mail: libraries@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01902 552025



Friday 3rd October 2014

Wolverhampton Black History Month Launch

This year Black History Month will be launched at the Arena Theatre. At this year's Launch you will have an opportunity to view Wolverhampton's Black history website:

blackhistoryandheritage.com

Organisers of Black History Month activities will be on hand with stalls and display. Find out more about upcoming events by picking up a copy the Black History Month programme.

Time: 6.30pm - 7.15pm/9.00pm
Cost: Free
Venue: Arena Theatre
Disabled Access: Yes
Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact David Bennett on 0780 646 1828

Organiser: Black History Month Events Group, c/o Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project, 24 Cosgrove Walk, Wolverhampton WV8 1YD

Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th October, Wednesday 22nd October and Friday 24th October 2014

Gazebo Theatre presents: The Hallowed Turf

A Story of Soldiers, Football and Heroes.

A young man's dream of becoming a footballer is brought to the front when he meets his hero on a very different front line.

This powerful and heartbreaking new play shares the true story of footballing star Walter Tull, the first black combat officer to serve in the British army in the First World War, told through the imagined letters of a young unknown soldier.

Come along at 6.30pm before the show on Friday 3rd October for the launch of Wolverhampton Black History Month 2014.

'Perfection' The Voice
 'This play was nothing less
 than fantastic' Female Arts.com

Featuring Oraine Johnson (The Tin Violin, Sorry! No Coloureds, No Irish, No Dogs) and Kaine Barr (BBC Doctors, Waterloo Road), this is an incredible story of new ground broken, bravery, friendship and the true horrors of life in the trenches.

From Pamela Cole-Hudson, the writer and director of the 'outstanding' "Sorry! No Coloureds, No Irish, No Dogs", "Jamaica 50", "Rivers to Cross" & "Sweet Tooth", and the company that brought you "The Sistren".

The play is touring nationally throughout October.

The play and participatory workshops are also available for schools and community organisations throughout October. Call 01902 497222.

ARENA THEATRE **Fr 3/10 Sa 4/10**

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: £10 full price;
£8 for concessions

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

Tel: 01902 321 321

or book online at www.arena.wlv.ac.uk

(£1 fee for online bookings)

BILSTON TOWN HALL **We 22/10**

Time: 8.00pm

Cost: £7.00 full price;
£5.00 for concessions

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

Tel: 01902 497222

THE HERITAGE CENTRE **Fr 24/10**

Time: 8pm

Cost: £7.00 full price;
£5.00 for concessions

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

Tel: 07815 522668/01902 421792

Organiser: Arena Theatre, Gazebo Theatre

For further information on the event contact the individual venues or Gazebo Theatre on Tel: 01902 497222 Email: admin@gazebotie.org



Sunday 26th October 2014

Joan Armatrading

In over 42 years of touring Joan Armatrading has never done a solo world tour. The Grand Theatre Wolverhampton is delighted to welcome Joan for this unique evening of entertainment which will be part of her last major tour.

Born in St Kitts, at the age of three Joan moved with her family to Birmingham, where she grew up.

There will be a small display on the heritage of St. Kitts.

Time:	7.30pm
Cost:	£27.50 - £29.50
Venue:	Grand Theatre
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

For telephone bookings
call: 01902 429212

Online bookings:
www.grandtheatre.co.uk

or call in person at the Grand Theatre,
Lichfield Street

Organiser: Grand Theatre



During World War One foreign citizens from the Allied powers, Black people and Jews were placed in internment camps



Wednesday 29th October 2014

Islands in the Sun:

Sharing stories from Africa and the Caribbean.

Join our storytellers celebrating the rich history of stories from Africa and the Caribbean. Bring your favourite story to share and discover some new ones.

Then, inspired by what you have hear, add your picture to our Island in the Sun.

For all the family.

Time: 1.00pm

Cost: A donation of £0.50p per child is welcome.
www.ticketsource.co.uk/newhamptonartscentre

Venue: Newhampton Arts Centre

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact Christine or Clare on 01902 572090

Organiser: Newhampton Arts Centre



During the First World War, soldiers from Gambia, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Kenya, Nigeria, Nysaland, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Sierra Leone and Gambia were mobilised to protect their borders from possible German incursions.



Thursday 30 October 2014

BLACK to where we belong

Presentations from leading academics on: Blackness, Britishness, Belonging and studying black history. Followed by Q&A and discussion.

Keynote External Speaker:

Dr Karen Salt, University of Aberdeen
**'Say My Name, Say My Name':
Blackness, Britishness and the
Question of Belonging**

In today's society, questions of belonging run rife. Who is British appears as a routine theme in headline after headline. At the same time, histories of black people remain outside the standard narrative of British life. This talk aims to get beyond headlines and sound bites and provocations and conflicts by offering a way to challenge narrow narratives of belonging while celebrating difference.

Organiser: University of Wolverhampton, Equality and Diversity Unit

Internal Speaker: Dr Shirin Housee, University of Wolverhampton

'Is it cos I'm Black or not?' What is a study of black history all about?

– a reminder of our heritage, of our past, of our achievements, failures gains and losses, of the horrors of racism..., as it was and as it continues. Is that what Black history is about?

Time:	1.00pm – 4.30pm
Cost:	Free
Venue:	Arena Theatre Wulfrun St, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE
Box office:	01902 321321
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

advanced booking only

For further information contact Bali Brophy, Email: b.brophy@wlw.ac.uk or Telephone: 01902 322954. Booking essential.

If you have any specific access needs such as British Sign Language Interpreting information required in alternative formats please let us know by Friday 24 October 2014.



Richard Stokes who grew up in Penn became the first Black Grenadier Guardsman.

“Brilliant chemistry ... sit back and let the lyrics (not just words) wash over you.” - Karen McCandless, The Public Reviews.

“For hard hitting political poetry, look no further” - Peter Flack, Chair of Everybody's Reading Festival.

Having seen this show I can actually, genuinely, honestly sing it's praises and say "hey you; you should go see this." - Nathan Human, KLIC Theatre, Producer.

Friday 7th November 2014 **Three The Hard Way**

Join three powerful poets: Jean Binta Breeze MBE, from the Jamaican Parish of Hanover; Lydia Towsey and Alison Dunne - as they share this new and exciting work.

Three the Hard Way derives from Jamaican culture where male DJs work together across venues, bouncing off and responding to each other's sets in collaboration and competition. The description was adopted by UK male dub poets, led by Linton Kwesi Johnson in the early 80s. Here, the name is again re-appropriated – but for the first time by three female artists of diverse backgrounds: Alison Dunne, Lydia Towsey and Jean 'Binta' Breeze MBE.

The event welcomes an audience of men and women to explore our times, from the personal to the political. Supported by Arts Council England and produced in association with Writing East Midlands.

Time:	7.30pm
Cost:	£7.00 full price; £5.00 for concessions
Tickets:	Bilston Town Hall
Tel:	01902 497222
Email:	admin@gazebotie.org
Venue:	Bilston Town Hall
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

For further information contact Bilston Town Hall Tel: 01902 497222 website: www.bilstontownhall.co.uk facebook: [bilstontownhall](https://www.facebook.com/bilstontownhall) or see www.3thehardwaypoets.wordpress.com

Organiser: Bilston Town Hall



“Many blacks, picked up in the West Indies or on the American coast ‘without hurting commerce’ were to be found on board our ships of war, where, when not incapacitated by climatic conditions, they made active, alert seamen and generally imagined themselves free”.
[Admiralty Records 1. 585]



CONTRIBUTION AND RECOGNITION

A look at some of the contributions made by Black people to Britain and its Allies up to and including the First World War

Throughout history Black people have served with distinction the British military. Black servicemen and women have either fought in the major wars or served as logistical support personnel. In this article we look at some of the contributions made and milestones reached by Black servicemen in the armed forces of Europe.

Black drummers, cymbal players and trumpeters were found in a number of regimental bands, from the time of Henry VII till 1841. Many of the Black soldiers were trumpeters. Trumpeters became natural targets for snipers on the battlefield.

John Blanc was a Royal Court trumpeter during reign of Henry VIII. He was the first Black man to be depicted in English art.

Historical information on Black soldiers from this period onwards can be found

in the Regimental Description Books of British Army regiments. Few were promoted.

The **West Indian Regiment** was formed in 1775, noted as the longest continually serving Black regiment from 1795 until 1927. The regiment campaigned in the Caribbean and later in Africa. Two members of the regiment were respectively awarded the Victoria Cross in 1866 and 1892. One of these recipients was Sergeant William Gordon who was awarded the Victoria Cross in March 1892 for entering the line of fire to rescue his commanding officer.

Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) Olaudah Equiano was born in the West African city state Benin (now part of modern day Nigeria). At the age of eleven he was abducted by slave traders and sold into slavery in Barbados. Equiano eventually ended

Approximately 16,000 men from the Caribbean volunteered to fight for Britain in the First World War.



up as slave to Michael Pascal, a British naval officer. He was given the name Gustavus Vassa.

Olaudah later settled in London and became a renowned anti-slavery campaigner. Olaudah wrote an account of his life, published as: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. He states that he was born in a region of present day Nigeria called 'Eboe'. The son of a chief, Equiano and his sister were abducted by slavers. They were taken to the Guinea coast and put on a slave ship.



11-7-1776 – Olaudah Equiano bought his freedom. He experienced warfare between 1756 and 1763, as a powder carrier in the Royal Navy.

Olaudah Equiano

31-3-1797– Olaudah Equiano died without seeing Africa again.

Black Drummers of the 29th Foot (c. 1830)



The **Worcestershire Regiment** recruited Black drummers from Guadeloupe from 1759 onwards. In 1820; there were 11 vacancies in the regimental band reserved for Black drummers. Major Murchinson in 1834 commented on the head wear of the drummer's uniform:

"There were three black drummers, time beaters in the band. Each was dressed as follows: a muslin turban with a silver crescent in front, and scarlet feather 12 inches long, with a silver cord and tassels entwined around the turban".

Six battalions of Senegalese servicemen were shipped to France to fight in the opening weeks of World War 1. In all 163,000 Africans served on the Western Front; 30,000 of them died.



Military historian John Ellis has identified 41 Black and Asian soldiers who were enlisted with the Royal Worcestershire Regiment between 1751 and 1843. Some of these soldiers may have been the sons of men who had also served the regiment. Thirteen were listed as West Indians, one as African and two as Indians.

Captain John Perkins, a native of Jamaica joined the British Navy in 1775, serving as a pilot. By 1782 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and given command of a Brig. In 1800 John Perkins achieved the rank of Captain. He spent his entire naval career in the Caribbean.

John Sutcliffe Fletcher from Antigua was slave to Vice Admiral Lord Hugh Seymour in Alcester in 1799.

Black workers in the Caribbean built some of the ships that made up the battle of Trafalgar battle fleet. The fleet commanded by Admiral Nelson on the eve of the Battle of Trafalgar

included a significant number of non-European sailors. The records show that some of the crew on Nelson's flagship were Africans. There were also seamen from the West Indies.

Somalis fought alongside Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar. Born in St Kitts, **William Afflick** served at the Battle of Waterloo. He later became a Chelsea Pensioner.

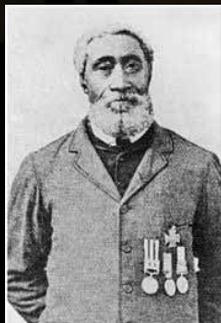


Sierra Leone born **James Horton** was one of the first African doctors to serve in the British Army. He joined the British Army Medical Service in 1859

after studying at Kings College, London and Edinburgh University. Horton initially served as an assistant staff surgeon and became a Surgeon Major in 1874. After retiring from the armed services in 1880 Horton returned to Sierra Leone and founded the Commercial Bank of Sierra Leone.



E. J. Scott was appointed Special Asst. Sec. of War in the USA on October 1, 1917.



William Hall is noted as the first Black man to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Hall was the son of a freed slave. He was born in Nova Scotia in the year 1827.

After joining the

Royal Navy on February 10, 1852. He became an able seaman on H.M.S. Rodney, and saw action in the Crimea for which he was awarded Turkish and English service medals. Hall was involved in the 1857 mission to relieve the official British Residency in Lucknow. Along with Lieutenant Thomas Young, Hall was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. William Hall continued in the Navy before his retirement in 1876. He was promoted to Quartermaster and Petty Officer serving on the ship HMS Peterel. William Hall died at the age of seventy eight at Horton Bluff, Nova Scotia where he has resided since his retirement.

George Bridgetower was a soldier and musician. He made his professional debut in Paris at age of 9.



Came to England where the Prince of Wales became his patron. Bridgetower attained a degree at Cambridge University.

In 1915 the **West Indies Regiment** recruited local volunteers to fight overseas. The regimental strength was 15,200, three quarters of which were Jamaicans. Public donation covered the cost of sending the Regiment to France. The Regiment saw action in Palestine, Italy and on the Western Front (the Sahara).

“Approximately 16,000 men from the Caribbean volunteered to fight for Britain in the First World War. During the Second World War 10,000 servicemen and women answered the call of the ‘Mother Country’. Thousands more served as merchant seamen.”



Garrett Augustus Morgan (1877 – 1963) patented the invention for the first traffic lights and the gas mask, respectively. The gas mask was one of the key technologies used by troops during World War 1.

Despite facing discrimination during their service, many former Black Caribbean servicemen and women and civilian war workers returned to settle in Britain in the first waves of mass immigration from the West Indies during the late 1940s and early 1950s” [Imperial War Museum].

The West Indian Regiment

campaigning in the Cameroons, and East Africa and Palestine campaigns in the First World War.



The son of a Barbadian born joiner, **Walter Tull** was born in Folkestone in 1888. He was the first Black officer in the British Army to lead white

soldiers into battle. Before the war Tull became the second professional Black footballer in Britain joining Tottenham Hotspurs Football Club in 1909. With the outbreak of war he joined the 17th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment which was despatched to France. Walter Tull's leadership skills resulted in his being promoted to the rank of

Sergeant in 1915. Two years later he was promoted again to a Second Lieutenant. Walter Tull fought in the second battle of the Somme. He died on the battlefield from a single bullet to the head. Walter Tull was recommended for a Military Cross. Walter Tull's body was never found and the Military Cross was never awarded.

Soldiers from Gambia, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Kenya, Nigeria, Nysaland, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and Sierra Leone were mobilised to protect their borders from possible German incursions. 1,423 soldiers of the Gold Coast Regiment were sent to campaign in East Africa.

137,000 soldiers were conscripted by the French for campaigns in Kamerun, Togo and Europe.

Six battalions of Senegalese were shipped to France to fight in the opening weeks of World War 1. In all 163,000 served on the Western Front; 30,000 of them died.



“No one could have been more loyal to his king and country than the Guyanese merchant seaman Lionel Turpin. He was just 19 years old when he enlisted in the British Army and was sent out with the No. 32 British Expeditionary Force to the Western Front in Europe.”

Up to the outbreak of war African soldiers in the British and German colonies were used for domestic security. They were organised to maintain order and had no combat training or experience. They were also poorly armed.

There were widespread revolts against recruitment in the French African colonies. This resistance came close to ending France's control in its African territories.

Some of the key areas of conflict in Africa saw British and Allied forces fighting to acquire the German colonies of Togo and Kamerun.

African troops in the German colony of Togo were not trained for combat. Their primary function prior to the war was restricted to policing. At the outbreak of the war the troops only possessed rifles previously used in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War.

Action in Togo concentrated on the defence and capture of the

strategically important wireless station at Kamina. The transmitter provided vital communication for German ships operating in the Southern Atlantic. On 12 August 1914 R.S.M Alhaji Grunshi, D.C.M., M.M., may have fired the first shot in the Togo campaign, thus becoming the first shot to be fired by British soldier during World War 1.

On the 24 August French and British forces converged on the station. Unable to hold the base, the Germans blew up the station and surrendered the following day.

The campaign in Kamerun began in August 1914 and continued until 18 February 1916. The Allies principal target was the capture of Duala, a strategically important port. As a deep water port Duala was important to all sides. Besides Duala the Allies also concentrated on taking the port of Victoria, Kamerun's capital city, Buea and the Benue river port of Garua in the north of the territory. The first British led force entered the north of Kamerun where they suffered an early setback.

In 1915 the West Indies Regiment recruited local volunteers to fight overseas. The regimental strength was 15,200, three quarters of which were Jamaicans. Public donation covered the cost of sending the Regiment to France. The Regiment saw action in Palestine, Italy and on the Western Front (the Sahara).



On 27 September 1914 the Allies captured Duala. Buea was taken on 15 November 1914. On 10 June 1915 Garua fell to the Allies, but Yaounde in the south of the territory lasted till January 1916 before succumbing to Allied forces. German forces in the northern town Mora moved their camp to a hill above the town. This strategy ensured the garrison held out until 18 February 1916.

Tens of thousands of East Africans were conscripted into the Carrier Corps. The corps was non combatant and provided logistical support for the Allies African campaigns. Just under 29,000 had died by October 1917 from accident or disease.

70,000 Black South Africans were conscripted to the South African Native Labour Corps. Africans served in uniformed Labour Units, providing much needed logistical support to front line troops in African and Europe. On February 21, 1917 the Mendi, a ship sank after a collision in the English Channel. 616 Africans died in the incident.

During the War 367,000 African Americans served in the Armed forces. 130,000 served in France.

Group Captain Larry Osbourne was the first Black man to Reach his senior rank in the RAF.



After African-American performer Josephine Baker expatriated to France, she famously smuggled military intelligence to French allies during World War II. She did this by pinning secrets inside her dress, as well as writing them in invisible ink on her sheet music.

What's happening at BE-ME

After some 15 years, BE-ME (Black and Ethnic Minority Experience) is about to be renewed.

Formed after the 50th anniversary in 1998 of the arrival of steamship Windrush, bringing migrants from the West Indies, BE-ME recorded the reminiscences of 107 people who left the Caribbean and South Asia to make their homes in Wolverhampton after the 2nd World War. The resulting 80 or so hours of audio and video tapes have been stored safely in Wolverhampton City Archive and extracts have been accessible on a dedicated website together with 12 interactive on-line 'learning packages' developed with local schools, colleges and the University of Wolverhampton. Over the years, BE-ME has been awarded some £250,000 of public money and has been showcased at The British Library and the London Science Museum and used extensively both locally and world-wide.

But now the future of the archive is uncertain. While paper records last for millennium, 20th and 21st century media is extremely fragile. The original recordings were made of tape formats which are rapidly becoming obsolete. Moreover, the tape itself is in danger of deteriorating. Urgent action is needed. Thanks to the University of Wolverhampton, the original interviews have been transferred to hard disc and DVD copies made. This will stabilise the valuable collection for years to come.

However, that's not the end of the story. The website and learning packages, that were so cutting-edge in 2001, are no longer suitable for today's technology and need to be up-graded for the U-tube generation. BE-ME trustees are working on this.

If you want to know more or would like to get involved, please e-mail f.challenger@virginmedia.com.



Recognition and Achievements – Black Wulfrunians in Wolverhampton and Elsewhere during 2013

We look back at some of the key events of 2013; and highlight some of the individual Wulfrunian achievers in Wolverhampton and elsewhere.

The sporting heritage of Black Wulfrunians is not limited to the martial arts and athletics. Past and present Power Lifting champions have also done their bit to keep Wolverhampton on the sporting map. On April 26 teacher **David Gray** won the European Power Lifting Championships; breaking six world records on the way. David works at the Midpoint Pupil Referral Unit at Wednesfield School.

Maxine Bygrave was appointed as chairman of the health and social care watchdog, Healthwatch Wolverhampton. Maxine has worked for over 20 years toward improving the health standards in Wolverhampton.

Twenty five year old **Charna James** from Penn, won the 'Outstanding New Teacher of the Year Award' at the Pearson Teaching Awards ceremony. Charna is a teacher of history, sociology and religious studies at Wednesfield High School. The award acknowledges outstanding achievement in the West Midlands.

Six year old **Dachiya Atkinson** stunned millions worldwide with her impressive breakdancing skills. Dachiya competed at the Pro Chelles International Dancing Competition



Dachiya Atkinson

which was held in Paris. Her dance routine was recorded and it attracted 5.3 million viewers on YouTube.

Dachiya whose family reside in Fallings Park uses the performing name B-Girl Terra. The video earned Dachiya and her sister an appearance on a US talk show hosted by Ellen DeGeneres.

Former Northicote High School pupil and University of Wolverhampton student **Richard Campbell**, secured a lucrative contract with the American clothing giant New Era Caps. Richard sent samples of his eye catching T-Shirt art to more than two hundred clothing firms before securing the New Era contract.

2013 was an eventful year for **Radzi Chinyanganya**. During the summer months he co-presented the BBC television programme: 'Wild'



Radzi Chinyanganya

The programme was aired on CBBC every Saturday morning. Radzi also replaced Ann Skelton on the popular BBC1 programme: 'Blue Peter'. The son of a Zimbabwean father and Scottish mother, Radzi graduated from Loughborough University.

Sarah Andam, a member of the Crimson Tide cheerleading team helped her troupe to fifth place in the Future Cheer championships held in Bournemouth. Sarah is one of a number of Black and Mixed Heritage members of the 40 strong cheerleading team. The Crimsons are based at the Wolverhampton Gymnastics Club.

Former St. Peter's Collegiate School pupil, **Matthew Hudson-Smith** secured two bronze medals in the 200m and 4x400m relay, at the European Junior Athletics Championships in July. The Lanesfield

teenager is a member of the Birchfield Harriers athletic club.

Power lifter **David Gray** continued to set new records in the sport. At a Four Nations tournament he set a new world record in the squat lift.

Following on from her YouTube success, **Dachiya** was recruited by Sainsbury's to be the face of their 'Back Tu School' campaign. Dachiya starred in a two minute television advert to promote the company's clothing line.

The Rev. Viscount McGregor, a pioneer of the Black led church in Britain, died on August 16. Born in Jamaica Rev. McGregor came to Britain in 1955, aged 17. He founded the Bilston branch of the New Testament Church of God in 1958. In 1960 Rev. McGregor began to focus on congregations in Shropshire. He returned to the church in Bilston in 1961 before working in Walsall where he officiated at the New Testament Church of God and the United Church of God.

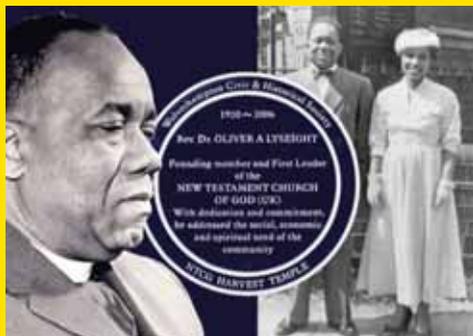


Rev. Viscount McGregor

In September karate siblings **Curtis and Amelia Harvey** both secured medals at the British International Open Karate Championships. The talented teenagers who train at the Ikon Martial Arts Centre in Bushbury competed against over 1,000 competitors from Britain and abroad; at the championships held at the New Emirates Stadium in Glasgow. Curtis secured gold in the junior male category. Amelia won a bronze medal in the under 21s section and a silver in the senior ladies open weight category.

September 21 was a milestone date for Black and other minority ethnic communities in Wolverhampton. The first Blue Plaque honouring **Dr. Oliver Lyseight**, a Black Wullfrunian for his contributions to society; was unveiled at the New Testament Church of God on Wednesfield Road.

Dr. Lyseight was born on Thursday December 11, 1919 in the district of Claremont, Hanover parish, Jamaica. He was the fourth child in a family with twelve children.



Dr. Lyseight came to Britain in 1953. He is credited for founding the Black led church in Britain and Europe.

Dr Lyseight brought together a number of immigrants to start their own church. They first held prayer meetings in a member's home in Faulkner Street. These meetings later moved to the local Y.M.C.A. in Stafford Street. The group decided to open a branch the New Testament Church of God, which was already active in Jamaica and the USA. The church had a starting congregation of 25.

Message from

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP

Today as you gather in Wolverhampton for the unveiling of a Blue Plaque in honour of the late Rev Dr Oliver A Lyseight, I wanted to send a message on behalf of the Labour party.

Reverend Lyseight was the founder of the New Testament Church of God here in Britain and a key figure amongst the Caribbean and wider community here. His work and reputation extended far beyond Wolverhampton. When faced with racism, he devoted his efforts to supporting the black community in order that they could practise their faith. The New Testament Church of God stands now with over 107 branches, clearly showing the important legacy of Reverend Lyseight's work.

Today we have come a long way in the fight against racism from the attitudes Reverend Lyseight experienced in the 1950s but there is still more to be done. It cannot be right that if you are a young black man in this country you are still today significantly less likely to be employed than other people, and that people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to be represented in senior roles public life. The Labour party will continue to fight hard for equal opportunity and against injustice and unfair discrimination as Reverend Lyseight did during his lifetime.

The **Sam Sharpe Project** based at the Newhampton Arts Centre closed after its funding was withdrawn by the Council. The project began in 1985 as a voluntary sector referral agency set up to provide community based alternatives to custodial sentences for Black youth. It was set up by the now defunct Wolverhampton Rasta Progressive Association. Over time the agency evolved into a music based project for aspiring young musicians. The Sam Sharpe project supported many up and coming young artists including Beverley Knight.

Dennice McKinnon who reached the 2009 semi finals of BBC's MasterChef, opened The Toffee Nosed Cake Company in Coalway Road, Penn. The shop provides a variety of cakes.

Beverley Knight was the leading lady in the West End play 'The Bodyguard' which premiered at the Adelphi Theatre in London on October 16. The show is based on the 1992 film of the same name starring Whitney Houston.

Talented Oxley siblings **Amelia and Curtis Harvey** became away from the 40th Wado-Kai European Karate

Curtis Harvey (front)



Championships with gold and bronze medals, respectively. Amelia took gold in the ladies individual competition at the event in Lisbon, Portugal. Brother Curtis took

bronze in the junior male individual competition. Amelia attends Coventry University where she is taking a sports scholarship.

Ten year old **Monique Oladujaye** and **Lynden Hunt** are proud members of the Wilkinson Primary School's Cross-country team. The team has won every Cross-country tournament they took part in during the 2012/2013 season. Lynden and Monique also took first place in the Mixed Relay Competition held at the Aldersley Stadium.

Wednesfield's **De-reece Williams** won the Young Sportsperson of the Year award at the Black Country Sport & Physical Activity Awards held at the Copthorne Hotel, Brierley Hill in

November. De-reece was awarded for winning the Under 16 World Kick Boxing Championships held in Slovakia.

The fashion and clothing chain **Diffusion**; an outstanding and successful example of Black led business in Wolverhampton celebrated its twenty fifth anniversary. The company whose first store opened in Broad Street in 1988, has grown into a multi million pound enterprise. Founded by Gerald Bailey and Carl Peddie, Diffusion has six stores in total.



Jada Palmer, Jevina Walker and Rochelle Malcolm were amongst the pupils from St. Peter's Collegiate School who sang a tribute in memory of Nelson Mandela. They performed at a special service held at St. Peter's Collegiate Church on December 15th.

Recognition and Achievements - Black People and Significant Events in Britain during 2013

After a determined public campaign the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government accepted defeat. **Mary Seacole's** role in caring for sick and wounded soldiers in the Crimean War was kept on the National Curriculum across the United Kingdom.

On February 6, **Ashley Cole** became the first Black British footballer to reach 100 caps for the England team.

History With Out Black History Is Not Complete History

Prime Minister David Cameron in October 2013.

2013 marks 100 years since **John Archer** became London's first African mayor.

2013 marked 50 years since Paul Stephenson and the West Indian Development Council (founded by Roy Hackett, Owen Henry, Audley

Evans and Prince Brown) successfully led the **Bristol Bus Boycott**. In 1963 a young Black man in Bristol was refused an interview for a job on the buses due to the colour of his skin. In 1963 Bristol was home to approximately 3000 people of Black Caribbean origin. They included ex-servicemen who had served Britain during World War 2.

This discriminatory act sparked a protest which attracted national attention and ultimately led the way to the country's first ever race discrimination law. Paul Stephenson whose father came from Africa became the spokesperson for the boycott campaign.



Ashley Cole



On Monday, April 15 Paul Stephenson OBE, Roy Hackett and Guy Reid Bailey OBE organisers of the 1963 bus boycott launched a programme of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the historic event.

The bus boycott divided the city of Bristol. It had support from members of the public and particularly by students at Bristol University, but the trade union leaders and the Bishop of Bristol were among those who sided with the Bristol Bus Company. The local MP Tony Benn waded in support of the boycott and pressed the Labour Party to lend its support. The High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago also got involved.

The boycott lasted a period of four months before the bus company gave in. Neither the Bristol Omnibus Company – a state owned company, nor the unions apologised for their racist stance.

The boycott was instrumental in determining prime minister Harold Wilson's resolve to introduce race relations legislation (The Race Relations Act).

In June **Malorie Blackman** became the new Children's Laureate. Malorie is an author of many books grew up in Lewisham, London. She declared her support for public libraries.

The actor **David Harewood** received a special accolade in July when he became the latest Birmingham born citizen to have his own star on the Broad Street Walk of Stars. Harewood best known for his roles in 'Homeland' and 'Blood Diamond' is originally from the Small Heath area of Birmingham.



Top to bottom:
Malorie Blackman
David Harewood's star on
Broad Street Walk of
Stars.



In August **Christine Ohorugu** became the first woman athlete to win 2 athletics world titles.

On October 15th **Doreen Lawrence** became a Peer in the House of Lords. The civil rights campaigner was honoured for her charitable work.

Recognition and Achievements - Black People and Significant Events Overseas during 2013



In February Blues guitarist **Magic Slim** (born Morris Holt) died at the age of 75. He died at a Philadelphia hospital. Magic Slim was influential in shaping the sound of Electric Blues – a style typical of Chicago. Magic Slim created a style of guitar playing that merged a vibrato with a slide guitar sound, he made by using his fingers on the guitar strings. He became an established figure in Chicago's Blues community during the 1950s. Having made his first record in 1966, Magic Slim released more than 30 albums.

The Ras Tafari Community in Jamaica and worldwide began a campaign to save **Pinnacle**. Pinnacle was the site of the first Ras Tafari settlement in the world. Up to 4,500 Rastas communed at Pinnacle. Rastas are campaigning to have Pinnacle recognised as a national heritage site. Currently the only part of the site granted such status is the ruins of the house Leonard Howell once lived in. Pinnacle is found near to Sligoville in the parish of St. Catherine.

Top to bottom:
Christine Ohorugu
Magic Slim

The site was purchased by the Ethiopian Salvation Society in 1940. The commune was targeted by the police who described it as a den for criminals. In July 1941 the commune was raided by the police and Howell was arrested. He was put on trial in August of that year, resulting in a prison sentence of two years. In October 1945 it was claimed that Howell had not bought the land outright and a writ to vacate was served by a local bailiff. The police removed all the residents, but they returned almost immediately. Howell was arrested a second time in 1944. By 1954 the commune was no longer. The police conducted a massive raid on Pinnacle. They razed the site and arrested 140 Rastas. From 1956 Leonard Howell resided at Tredegar Park

In June Native Australians were in mourning as the death of **Mandawuy Yunupingu** was announced by the Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

Mandawuy was one of Australia's most famous musicians and advocate for Native Australian rights. He was the lead singer of the band Yothu Yindi whose hit songs included: 'Treaty' and 'Tribal Voice'. Mandawuy whose career blossomed in the 1980s and 1990s died aged 56.

A native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, **Cecile Kyenge** became Italy's first Black minister. Kyenge soon experienced the type of racism fuelled by the myth of the Black as savage, having not contributed anything to modern civilisation. She has received death threats and racial slurs. Kyenge was described as an orang-utan by a white politician; and at a rally where she was speaking about citizenship and minority communities a spectator threw bananas at the Integration Minister. In July the vice president of Italy's Senate stated: *"Tigers, bears, monkeys, all of them, but when I see pictures of Kyenge I cannot but think of the features of an orangutan"*.



Top to bottom:
Mandawuy Yunupingu
Cecile Kyenge





Top to bottom:
Henrietta Lacks
Martin Luther King Jr.
Nelson Mandela



On August 7th the US government's National Institutes of Health made a historic agreement with Henrietta Lacks family on HeLa Cells. The great advances made in mapping the human gene, the polio vaccine and research into cancer, AIDS, the effects of radiation on human cells and the countless lives saved as a result, is all due to the resilience of the cells of an African-American woman – **Henrietta Lacks**. Cells taken from her body without her knowledge were and still are grown in labs around the world. Henrietta's cells were the first human cells that could be grown in a laboratory. Over 20 tonnes of her 'HeLa' cells have been grown and sent to labs across the globe. The Western pharmaceutical and other companies made enormous profits from Henrietta's cells, but neglected to pay her or her surviving relatives any compensation. Her surviving family were denied the opportunity to have some control over access to and use of her cells. The agreement gave them a say on scientists' access to the cells' DNA code. They would also be acknowledged in any resulting studies.

On August 28 people across the United States and around the world celebrated the famous 'I Have a Dream' speech delivered by **Martin Luther King Jr.** It is widely accepted that this event signalled a turning point in the fight against racist segregation in the USA. The speech in itself was just short of ordinary until Dr. King spoke the words: "I have a dream". His powerful oratory inspired and motivated millions placing it alongside the other great speeches that has changed the course of history. Women were not allowed on the platform when the speech was being made. As a consequence the women of the movement founded the National Organisation for Women two years later.

Nelson Mandela – the first Black president, and the first democratically elected president of South Africa died on December 5th.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Planning an event for Black History Month 2015?

To find out how you can get your event listed for free contact:

David Bennett
The Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project,
24 Cosgrove Walk, Pendeford,
Wolverhampton, WV8 1YD.

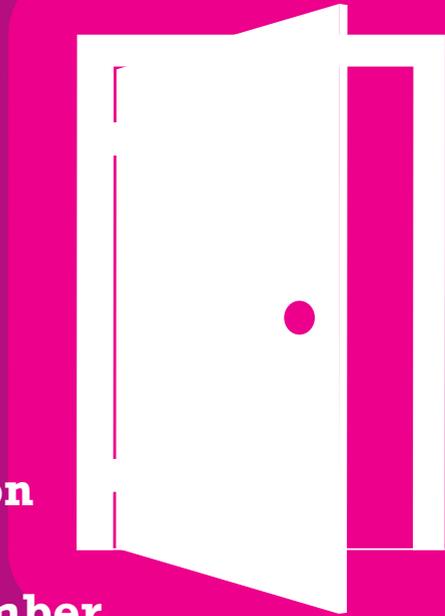
Mobile: 07806 461828
Email: blacklocalhistory@live.co.uk

The Black History Month Events Group meets once a month between January and August. If you are interested in attending meetings of the Group contact David Bennett.

We endorse the recycling of our magazine and would encourage you to pass it on to others to read when you have finished with it.

We welcome any comments, compliments or criticisms you may have about this publication or Black History Month in Wolverhampton. Please send them to David Bennett using the contact details above. All enquiries will be dealt with promptly and where necessary, in confidence.

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