

# WOLVERHAMPTON



**BLACK**

History & Heritage

WOLVERHAMPTON

2016

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**  
**OCTOBER 2016**



## Famous Quotes

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

“The Black skin is not a badge of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness.”

“There is no force like success, and that is why the individual makes all effort to surround himself throughout life with the evidence of it; as of the individual, so should it be of the nation.”

“Glorious shall be the battle when the time comes to fight for our people and our race.”

“Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds!”

Marcus Garvey.

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



# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Welcome to the 16th 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.

The theme for Black History Month 2016 in Wolverhampton is 'Health & Wellbeing'. This year in addition to promoting events with a specific focus on Black history, we also highlight events focusing on Black people and Health.

In 1998 individuals from the community of Wolverhampton came together and formed a Windrush Committee to organise a local event in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the landing of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury, which carried a significant number of African-Caribbean migrants to Britain. This event was an overwhelming success and was featured prominently on TV and broadcasted on the radio.

We encourage and invite people living in and outside Wolverhampton to support these events and in doing so, help in creating a cohesive society, where racism is not accepted nor tolerated, where everyone is treated according to their needs and rights and where cultural diversity is celebrated. 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.

David Bennett  
Black History Month Group Chair

## Foreword by **Professor Geoff Layer,**

### Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton



Welcome to your guide to Black History Month 2016, highlighting the activities and events you can get involved with at the University of Wolverhampton and in the local community as part of this year's month-long celebrations.

The theme this year is health and wellbeing. As the University of Opportunity, we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our students and staff, and so recognise the value of ensuring people within communities are happy and healthy.

Black History Month gives us the chance to celebrate the wealth of local heritage and culture contributed to by Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups through a series of events detailed within this guide.

I would like to say thank you on behalf of the coordinating partners to those who work extremely hard to develop black history events and resources, in a way that makes them accessible to the local communities we serve and people worldwide.

My colleagues and I look forward to being a part of the activities in October and our continued involvement in keeping black history alive.

# 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.

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 for the diverse cultures and skills amongst people in the community in Wolverhampton. Do support these events by encouraging your partner, friends and relatives to come along and join in these celebrations.

This year's events were organised by:

African Caribbean Community Initiative	Higher Level World
Arena Theatre (University of Wolverhampton)	Newhampton Arts Centre
Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project	Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Equality & Diversity Unit (University of Wolverhampton)	Gazebo Theatre in Education
Gazebo Theatre in Education	Alicia Spence
Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies Centre	
Wolverhampton Civic & Historic Society	

## 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 pay tribute to late Dawn Takura, a committed community worker who has worked to bring Black history to the community.

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](mailto:blacklocalhistory@live.co.uk)



Dawn represented the women – the backbone of the African Caribbean community - who tirelessly work to serve their community



University of Wolverhampton

Students' Union

## Black History Month Message

We at the Students' Union are excited about this year's Black History Month – not only is it an opportunity for us all to embrace the diverse society we live in, it also offers us the chance to celebrate the substantial role that Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups have played in shaping culture both in our local community and around the world.

This is the time to honour the legacy of heroes such as Maya Angelou, Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Mahatma Gandhi, Rosa Parks and many more, including key figures from Wolverhampton, through entertainment and educational events across the institution and the community with a specific focus on this year's theme: health and wellbeing.



We will be running our own Black History Month Campaign for our students, on behalf of everyone at the Students' Union; we thank all those who have helped in organising the activities and wish you all a successful and memorable Black History Month.



**President** Habiba Amjad  
University of Wolverhampton Students' Union



Friday 30th September 2016

## Wolverhampton Black History Month Launch

This year Black History Month will be launched at the Heritage Centre. The Black History Month theme for Wolverhampton in 2016 is 'Health & Wellbeing'. This year's Launch will include a talk about the life and work of Enrico Stennett, by his widow Mary.

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

Time:	7.00pm – 9.00pm
Cost:	Free
Venue:	Heritage Centre, Clifford Street, Wolverhampton, WV6 OAA.

Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes



For further information contact David Bennett on 07806461828

Organiser:

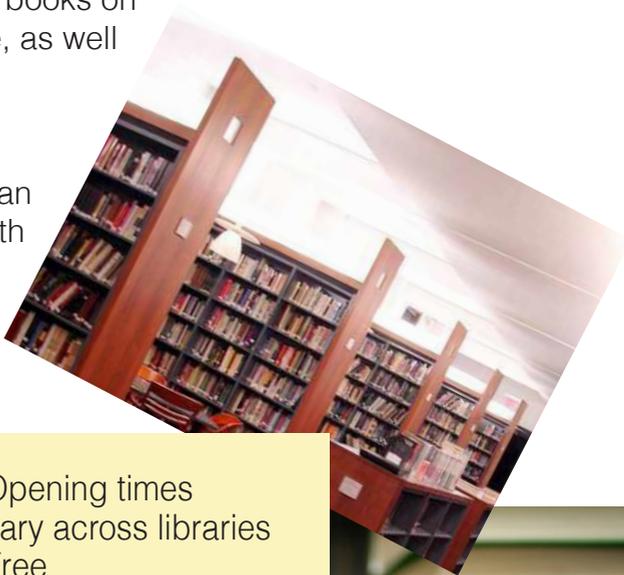
Black History Month Events Group, c/o Black Local History & Cultural Archives Project, 24 Cosgrove Walk, Wolverhampton WV8 1YD

Saturday 1st to Monday 31st October 2016

## Black History Month at Wolverhampton Libraries

Wolverhampton libraries mark Black History Month every year by promoting books on Black history and culture, as well as 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

Saturday 1st October 2016

## Annual Black History Quiz

Higher Level World invite all to this year's renewal of Wolverhampton's Black History Quiz. We always welcome new participants. If you feel that you can lift the trophy, or if you just want to enter to enjoy and to learn more then contact the organizers.

Time: 8.00pm – Late

Venue: To be confirmed.

Cost: Free

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact:  
Higher Level World on  
**0845 467 6595**

Organiser:  
Higher Level World,  
1 St Jude's Road, Tettenhall,  
Wolverhampton, WV6 0EB.

**higher level**  
— — Caring - Educating - Stimulating — —



Wolverhampton Art Gallery's

Presents

## Back to Black

On

Saturday 1st October 2016

To

Monday 31st October 2016

Black artists from or linked to Wolverhampton have made a huge impact on Black and British arts from the 1980s to the present day

Organiser:  
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Venue:  
Wolverhampton Art Gallery,  
Lichfield Street,  
Wolverhampton,  
WV1 1DU.



## Back to Black

Saturday 1st to Monday 31st October 2016

For Black History Month 2016 Wolverhampton Art Gallery's splendid Victorian Gallery will host an exhibition of artwork by contemporary Black British artists.

Following the success of our recent exhibition, Black Art in Focus, the display Back to Black will include the very latest items acquired through our Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures project as well as a selection of paintings, prints and sculptures by black and Asian artists from our existing collection.

Visitors can also listen to audio recordings of local artists and community members speaking about their experiences and influences, also commissioned as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded project.

Venue:  
Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Time:  
Open 7 days a week

Monday – Saturday  
10.30 am - 4.30 pm

Sunday 12-4 pm

Cost:	Free
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

For further information contact  
Tess Radcliffe, Curatorial and  
Learning Manager, on  
Tel. 01902 552033 or email:  
[tess.radcliffe@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:tess.radcliffe@wolverhampton.gov.uk)  
or the Learning Team:  
[artsheritagelearning@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:artsheritagelearning@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

Saturday 1st to Monday 31st October 2016

## Back to Black Art Schools Workshop

For Black History Month 2016 Wolverhampton Art Gallery is launching a new Black Art schools workshop inspired by our display Back to Black showcasing the art gallery's important and powerful collection of 20th Black British Art.

The workshop lasts 2-hours, starting with a 1-hour gallery tour and group discussion exploring our Black Art collection, and a 1-hour artist-led creative workshop inspired by the art work on display in the gallery.

The workshop will continue to be offered to schools throughout the year after launching in October.

Venue:  
Wolverhampton Art Gallery  
Lichfield Street,  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1DU.

Time:  
Open 7 days a week

Monday – Saturday  
10.30 am - 4.30 pm  
Sunday 12-4 pm

Cost: £5  
per child for a 2-hour gallery  
tour and workshop. Free to  
SLA schools.

Disabled Access: Yes  
Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact Tess Radcliffe, Curatorial and Learning Manager, on tel. 01902 552033 or email: [tess.radcliffe@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:tess.radcliffe@wolverhampton.gov.uk) or the Learning Team: [artsheritagelearning@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:artsheritagelearning@wolverhampton.gov.uk)



Percy Lavon Julian – a former slave - became a successful chemist and secured a total of 115 patents during his career.



Sunday 2nd October 2016

## Nubian Natural Sunday Market

Visit this unique indoor market bringing together Black retailers of cultural items, books, dolls, clothes, gift cards, posters, films and more. This family event is open to all. Families can explore the range of black centric educational materials not available in any local bookstore.

Caribbean eat in or take out by Adessa's Catering.

Time:	1.00pm – 8.00pm
Venue:	Heritage Centre, Clifford Street, Wolverhampton, WV6 OAA
Cost:	Free
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

For further information contact: Karl Samuels (Centre Manager) on 01902 421 729.

Organiser: Alicia Spence



One of Percy's inventions was a method for synthesizing and identifying physostigmine, a drug used to treat glaucoma and to improve memory in Alzheimer's patients. It was also used as an antidote to nerve gas.



## The Life and Work of Enrico Stennett

Wednesday 5th October 2016

### Time:

7.30pm – 9.00pm

### Venue:

Blakenhall Community Centre, The Old School

### Address

73 Dudley Road,  
Blakenhall,  
Wolverhampton  
WV2 3BY.

Cost: £2.00

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

Enrico Stennett worked as a youth officer then Community Relations Officer for Wolverhampton in the 1980s. A man who has made significant contributions to his community, but has not achieved any recognition.

Mary Ann Stennett will speak about Enrico's early days in Britain to his time serving the communities in Wolverhampton. In a revealing talk she will speak about some of his achievements that remain unrecognized today.

Organiser:

Wolverhampton Civic & Historical Society,  
Bantock House Museum, Finchfield Road,  
Wolverhampton, WV3 9LQ.

For further information contact

Wolverhampton Civic & Historical Society. Email: [wchs@mail.com](mailto:wchs@mail.com)

David Bennett on 07806461828



Dr Daniel Hale Williams performed the first open heart surgery in 1893 when he removed a knife from the heart of a patient who was the victim of a stabbing.



Saturday 8th October 2016

## Annual Gala Dinner Dance Awards Presentation

ACCI's Annual Gala Dinner Dance. The event will host the Beacon of Hope award presentations to service users and a nominated supporter of the organisation. Followed by an evening of music, laughter and socialisation.

Three-course Caribbean meal will be served.

Time:	6.30pm
Venue:	Ramada Park Hall Hotel & Spa, Park Drive, Wolverhampton, WV4 5AJ.
Cost:	£35.00
Disabled Access:	Yes
Open to Public:	Yes

For further information contact Thess Gordon: 01902 571230.

Website : [www.acci.org.uk](http://www.acci.org.uk)

Organiser: ACCI,  
 ACCI Admin office: 217 Waterloo Terrace, Newhampton Road  
 East, Wolverhampton, WV1 4BA.  
 Telephone: 01902 571230



On June 30, 2016 a statue in honour of pioneering nurse, Mary Seacole, was unveiled to the public. The statue stands in the garden of St Thomas' hospital on London's Southbank.

Sunday 16 October 2016

## World Mental Health Day

An annual event hosted by African Caribbean Community Initiative (ACCI) at the Jubilee Christian Centre, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues. The day also provides an opportunity for service users to share their journey from mental ill health.

### Venue:

Jubilee Christian Centre,  
121 Merridale Street, Graiseley,  
Wolverhampton, WV3 0RE

**Time:** 11.00am

**Cost:** Caribbean meal: £4.00 Adults  
£2.00 Children aged 3-10 years

Caribbean meal will be served at:  
The Heritage Centre, Clifford Street,  
Wolverhampton WV6 0AA.

Disabled Access: Yes

Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact Thess  
Gordon: 01902 571230. Website :  
[www.acci.org.uk](http://www.acci.org.uk)

Organiser: ACCI,  
217 Waterloo Terrace, Newhampton Road  
East, Wolverhampton, WV1 4BA.  
Admin Office, 01902 571230



Tuesday 18th October 2016

And

Wednesday 19th October 2016

## Gazebo Theatre Presents:

Sorry! No Coloureds,  
No Irish, No Dogs

This year, Gazebo brings back one its most powerful plays- an exploration of racism and migration, in response to events taking place across the UK and internationally.

Two strangers find themselves in a room of suitcases, books and stories which take them on a journey of discovery, reflection and tragedy, and bring the events of hundreds of years gone before bang up to date.

**ARENA  
THEATRE**  
WOLVERHAMPTON

# GAZEBO

Theatre In Education - Youth Arts - Training - Creative Consultation  
Community arts - Partnership Initiatives

Featuring, amongst others, Mary Seacole, Walter Tull, Black Panther- Obi Egbuna, Mary Prince, Olaudah Equiano and William, who sailed aboard the SS Empire Windrush, this play is 'eye opening', 'thought provoking' and set to stimulate discussion.

## Arena Theatre

**Tuesday 18th October 2016**

**Time:** 7.30pm  
**Venue:** Arena Theatre,  
Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SE.  
**Cost:** £10.00/ £8.00 concession  
**Disabled Access:** Yes  
**Open to Public:** Yes

## Bilston Town Hall

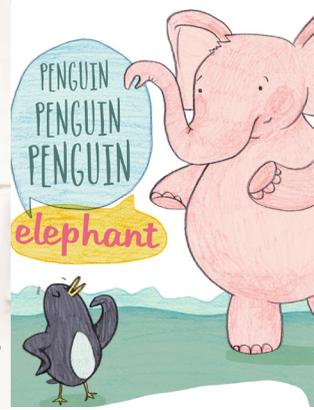
**Wednesday 19th October 2016**

**Time:** 7.30pm  
**Venue:** Gazebo Theatre,  
Bilston Town Hall, Church Street, Bilston,  
WV14 0AP  
**Cost:** £10.00/ £8.00 concession  
**Disabled Access:** Yes  
**Open to Public:** Yes

For further information about the show itself and future tours and workshops contact Pamela Cole-Hudson, Artistic Director, Gazebo- [pamela.cole-hudson@gazebotheatre.com](mailto:pamela.cole-hudson@gazebotheatre.com) or call on 01902 497222



"A funny, visually expressive piece of storytelling... Exploring diversity has never been so much fun" The Stage



Thursday 27th October 2016

Newhampton Arts Centre Presents: **Penguin! Elephant!**

"Waddle waddle waddle, stomp stomp stomp"  
Goblin's new musical adventure, celebrates identity and diversity for children ages 3+.



Penguin is a little bit selfish. Penguin loves fish fingers, but never shares them. Everything is black and white and that's just the way Penguin likes it. Until one day Elephant turns up. Elephant is big. Elephant is messy. Elephant likes lots of colour everywhere. However will Penguin cope!?

With original songs, hilarious physical comedy and dance, Penguin! Elephant! is a magical new show about celebrating differences for anyone who's ever waddled like a Penguin or stomped like an Elephant.

The show includes a rap about Fish Fingers, some food based-mess and a magical balloon ride that will have children ages 3+ jumping for joy.

Time: 11.00am and 2.00pm  
Venue: Newhampton Arts Centre,  
Dunkley St, Wolverhampton  
WV1 4AN.

Cost:  
£6/£4 advance  
£6.60/£4.50 on the door

Disabled Access: Yes  
Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact: Christine or Clare, 01902 572090  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/newhamptonartscentre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/newhamptonartscentre)



The world's first Black test-tube twins, Nathan and Natasha Duncan, were born in 1982 in Bradford.



Thursday 27th October 2016

## Mentoring Benefits for Well-being

Talk by Rajinder Mann OBE, PIA Executives Ltd and facilitator of the university's Steps to Leadership Programme.

This event will focus on the benefits of mentors to gain an insight and meaningful approach to developing oneself. Mentoring had been used widely in the work-place but has many benefits for the personal health and well-being of an individual.

Black staff can benefit from having senior mentors for guidance and support and the mentors can link them into wider networks. This is a critical tool for understanding race relations and building equity for both the mentor and mentee.

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/>

Over the last fifteen years through the work of the Black Leadership Initiative we have empowered black staff using mentors in senior positions to help navigate their careers and increase the diversity representation in leadership.

**Time:** 5.30pm – 7.30pm

**Venue:**  
 University of Wolverhampton,  
 Room MK045 Lecture Theatre  
 (George Wallis MK Building), City  
 Campus (Wulfruna), Wulfruna  
 Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1DT.

**Cost:** Free  
 Disabled Access: Yes  
 Open to Public: Yes

For further information contact: Contact  
 Bali Brophy Email: [b.brophy@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:b.brophy@wlv.ac.uk) or  
 Telephone No: 01902 322954

### Booking Essential

If you have any specific access needs such as British Sign Language Interpreting or information required in alternative formats please let us know by **Thursday 20 October 2016**



Saturday 29th October 2016

## Wolverhampton Local History Fair

**Time:** 10.00am – 4.00pm

**Venue:**

Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies Centre,  
Molineux Hotel Building,  
Whitmore Hill,  
Wolverhampton, WV1 1SF.

**Cost:** Free  
Disabled Access: Yes  
Open to Public: Yes

For further information  
contact:- Heidi McKintosh  
(City Archivist)  
Telephone: 01902 552 033

The Black local History & Cultural Archives Project (BLHCAP) manages documents covering all aspects of the histories of Black and South Asian people in Wolverhampton.

Visit the BLHCAP stall at this year's Local History Fair. Find out how to access information and documents held at City Archives.

**Organiser:**

Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies Centre

**Wolverhampton**  
City Council



Willard Wigan is one of the world's greatest artists. No other person has achieved the level of sophistication that has made his micro sculptures the smallest in the history of Art.

# The Historical Roots of the Black Identity Crisis

If you love your culture, you will think your culture. And to the best of your ability, you will live your culture.

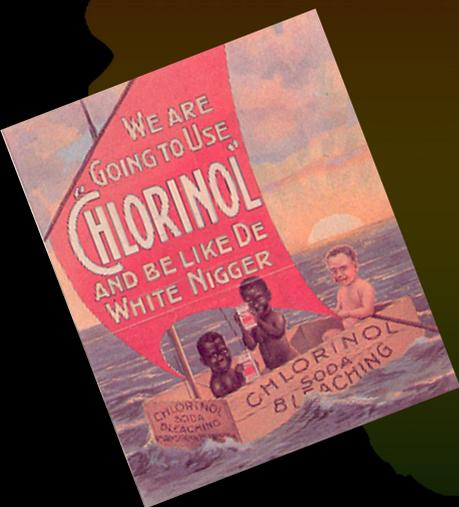
## Racism and Racial Pride

The effects of racism on mental well being has been well documented both in Britain and also in the U.S.A.

The effects of racism on the mental well being of Black people is not a modern phenomenon. It has its roots in slavery and colonialism.

The racial myths and stereotypes of today are based on the mis-education of all peoples when it comes to the history and civilization of Black people.

Racism gives the oppressor a false sense of racial superiority. It also gives rise to feelings of inferiority among those whose culture and colour is non-European.



Dragnetomania was a term used to describe slaves who developed a desperate wish to be free and who runs away.

The European system of racism has its roots in the enslavement of Black African peoples in the Americas. European states embarked upon a campaign of kidnapping Africans into slavery.

In forcing Africans, many of whom came from advanced cultures, to become chattled slaves on 'New World' plantations, the Europeans began to sow the seeds of a very complex system of Euro-centric racism, kept alive through ignorance and barbarity.

The ideology behind racism came into being as a means of justifying European dehumanisation of Black Africans. The European concept of civilization had the white man believing he was the most intelligent and most civilized man on earth.

During the slavery era Africans were banned from speaking their own languages, wearing traditional African garments, preparing and using their own medicines and practising their traditional religion – in other

words all attempts were made to remove their African identity to make them more compliant and less likely to rebel against their enslavement.

*“The policies the missionaries advocated were those that legitimised colonial rule. The British colonial ruling class was well aware that to dominate successfully it needed to strengthen its position with associates recruited from among the ranks of Africans. The mission schools were assigned the task of manufacturing that class, of bringing a spirit of harmony and co-operation between the exploiters and exploited.*

*The Christian missionaries who taught the Africans to accept their miserable lot on earth in return for post mortem rewards in heaven supplied the ideology that goes with absolute submission to conquest and colonial status.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> [ Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, p56]  
Author Bernard Makhosewe Magubane. Monthly Review Press London 1979.

The conversion of Africans to Christianity became a widespread trend towards the end of slavery and particularly in the early years of emancipation. The European and American missionaries taught Africans that:

- They belonged to a cursed race
- All African religions are manifestations of witchcraft and therefore evil
- Black is evil, white is good
- Jesus is a long blonde haired European

Europeans set out to systematically dismantle the African way of life and in particular their belief systems. Sierra Leone was founded as a Christian colony. In essence it was a bridgehead on the continent from where missionaries would venture into the interior to 'civilise' the 'barbaric' and 'pagan' Africans. From the 1790s onwards European

missionaries set out to achieve this aim. The Church Missionary Society set up its base of operations in 1804. They were soon followed in 1811 by the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

Recaptured and repatriated Blacks from the North American continent were planted in Sierra Leone. Ripe for conversion, many were encouraged to re-settle in villages built on the 'enlightened' European model with a church at its centre.

Many of these converts would also join the ranks of the white missionaries. Dressed in the clothes of the European, adopting European names and displaying the inflections of Europeans; the Black converts set about with zeal the task of converting and thus 'civilising' the African.

The offspring of recaptured Africans were labelled Creoles. Creoles tended to the belief that European Christianity and the



Mel Chevannes – Wolverhampton's first Black councillor - was also the first Black chairperson of Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust.

European way of life were vastly superior to the religions and ways of life of the native African.

Despite the efforts of the missionaries the Europeans could not eliminate religious practices and beliefs that had lasted a millennia before their arrival in West Africa. The African's response to Christianization was to bring some of their rituals underground and tie in Africanist religious belief with Euro-Christian teachings.

One example is the United Methodist Church which was founded in Lagos in 1917, in response to the Methodist missionaries' war against polygamy.

[Religions of the Oppressed, p. 50]



Because of his research into the storage and shipment of blood plasma Charles Drew is credited with saving the lives of hundreds of Britons during World War 2.

## Personality

Personality is connected in some way with culture and social organisation. An individual's life experiences attributes to a personality unique to her/him. Environmental influences are attributed to a personality that is modal (average) within a group in some societies.

Modal personalities may constitute particular experiences shared in common, which as a result of group interaction, develop traits characteristic of it. Personality deposits types of signals sent out.

Personality is how one views oneself, life and situations around him or her. Although we are an extension of our parents' personality, an exact definition of an individual's personality is not possible.

*“The worst trick of all is when he names us Negro and calls us Negro. And when we call ourselves that, we end up tricking ourselves...”*

*“We were scientifically produced by the white man. Whenever you see somebody who calls himself a Negro, he’s a product of Western civilization – not only Western civilization, but Western crime...”*

*“One of the main reasons why we are called Negro is so we won’t know who we really are. And when you call yourself that, you don’t know who you really are. You don’t know what you are, you don’t know where you came from, you don’t know what is yours. As long as you call yourself a Negro, nothing is yours. No languages – you can’t lay claim to any language, not even English; you mess it up. You can’t lay claim to any name, any type of name that will identify you as something that you should be. You can’t lay claim to any culture as long as you use the word Negro to identify yourself. It attaches you to nothing. It doesn’t even identify your color.”*

## Personality Disorders

A prominent African-American psychologist, Dr Na’im Akbar describes three manifestations of the Black Identity Crisis. One or more of these manifestations may affect an individual’s personality. Let us explore Dr. Akbar’s theories a little with examples from across the Black African Diaspora.

The alien self disorder is where one perceives oneself to be other than oneself on a race, sex or class level. In some cases the denial is so great that when subjected to incidents of racial abuse, they will refuse to acknowledge they were victimised in any way. They will grow up and tell others that they never experienced racism when they were children. They will even develop a dislike for anything that is Black – unless it is

<sup>2</sup> [Malcom X – on Afro American History, p.16]

accepted by their white peers. In extreme cases they will deny that they are Black.

The above quote from Malcolm X is a significant case in point. From post slavery to today African Caribbean people have, in the main, refused to class themselves as African, and many Black Africans refused to accept the fact that both groups are of Black African descent. In Britain today a large proportion of African Caribbean people regard Black Africans as inferior to them and 'backward'. Embracing one's 'Africaness' has proved an almost impossible task for many African Caribbean people in Britain today.

The refusal to accept the common connection is evidence of the alien self disorder in practice. This also implies a marked reluctance to define oneself outside of the definitions imposed through years of racist exploitation, slavery and colonialism.

## Example from the 1980's

In the mid-1980s there was a debate amongst Black students at the Polytechnic, Wolverhampton about changing the name of the Afro Caribbean Society (ACS) to African Caribbean Society.

There was a significant proportion of the African Caribbean dominated Society who felt that the change of name would mean that the ACS became a club for Black Africans only.

Others argued that it was about Black people defining themselves and drawing upon their historical experiences and cultural bonds. I was asked to give a talk. I gave the talk in which I stressed the importance of revisiting the terms given to describe Black people.



Racism, slavery and colonialism has had a detrimental effect on the mental wellbeing of people of Black African descent today.

To closely scrutinise these terms, identify their actual meanings and either accept or reject the Euro-centric tag or use a definition by Black people that is free of any negative connotations.

During the talk I asserted that the term 'Caribbean' is the English derivative of the Spanish word 'Caribe'. The meaning of both words had not changed, yet residents of the islands in the Caribbean Sea proudly cling to the term without looking into its meaning.

As the word Caribe was used to describe the Black inhabitants of the islands as cannibalistic, the English who came into the region adopted the term and kept its meaning intact. I argued that when people from the

American Islands refer to themselves as Caribbean, they are actually calling themselves cannibals.

The response from a proportion of the African Caribbean students was one of extreme hostility and denial.

I may still use the term today, but only because the African Caribbean community has yet to debate the issue properly and come up with an alternative supported by consensus.

*"The mere fact that we come together to debate whether or not we are Africans or why we should or should not refer to ourselves as such only testifies to us being a people who are desperately willing to affirm our position in the world within the context of our acquired colonial mentality.*

*It also shows that, in the main, we are still very much ignorant of our socio-historical achievements as a people. stand our position in the world we have to*

"If you don't love yourself nobody else will; and if you don't love your colour you can't love yourself. "One of our chief problems is that we don't care about ourselves individually or collectively as black people" [Dr. Na'im Akbar, quoted in *The Voice*, 31 January 1989]

*understand our history.*

*When we use negative word concepts we not only maintain self-division amongst ourselves, but continue to 'traditionalise' racism throughout the world."*

*David Bennett – Presentation to Afro Caribbean Society*

## Personality Disorders

A person suffering from the anti self disorder will express: "overt and covert hostility towards the groups of one's origin and thus one's self".

Anti self is a common disorder afflicting a growing number of Black youth in Britain today. The phenomenon of so called 'Black on Black' violence and murders is the most visible manifestation of the anti self disorder.

Another manifestation is the unwillingness of many Black people to speak about the evils of the slavery holocaust, believing it does no good to remember. Contrast this with the Jewish nation taking pride in remembering their holocaust and they won't make the world forget.

During the 1980s and 1990s, I observed the behaviour of Black people in Wolverhampton and Birmingham towards supporting disaster relief in non- industrialised countries. I noticed that when Black people organise fund raising events for disaster relief in African countries they received a poor response from the Black Community.

Even though the organisers would charge relatively cheap entrance fees for fundraising dances and get Black performers to sing for free, many of these events would be half empty and in most cases the organisers would struggle to



Dr. Patricia Bath is the first African American woman doctor to receive a patent (the Cataract Laserphaco Probe) for a medical invention. She developed a procedure for removing cataract lenses using lasers. The lasers vaporized cataracts without pain or side effects.

cover their costs. On the other hand when Black people organised fundraising events for mainstream charities they set high entrance fee charges. These events were always well attended and successful. This tendency to support white instead of Black prompted the question: why are Black people against supporting their own?

In Martinique, Frantz Fanon observed:

*“The school system encouraged children to look down on Creole. Some families completely forbid the use of Creole, and mothers ridicule their children for speaking it”.*<sup>3</sup>

## Self Destructive Disorder

Victims of the self destructive disorder will embark upon the heavy use of drugs to pursue an often destructive retreat from reality.

## Environment, Society and Identity

Environment also affects an individual’s personality. Living in a predominantly white society places non-white peoples in an environment where they are bombarded with racial stereotypes and where they see success as the white man’s preserve.

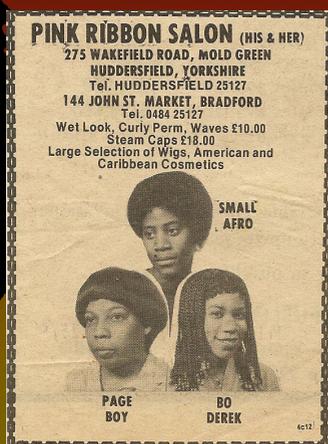
The more they are exposed to Euro-centric cultural norms the more their identity struggles to come to terms with their position in society. Saifullah Khan (1979) noted the creation of identity problems among West African children who have been with white foster parents for long periods.

Other studies have confirmed this for Black and Asian children of mixed heritage, who have become part of a white family through fostering or adoption. This is primarily because the children have little

<sup>3</sup>[Fanon, Frantz () The Wretched of the Earth, p.19]

[Khan, Saifullah (1979) Minority Families in Britain: Support and Stress, London, Macmillan]

or no contact with people of their own cultural group and are not familiarised with the language, history and cultural norms of their Black or Asian parents.



Black girls fare worse than their male peers. They face pressures from two evils – racism and sexism. Not only are they experiencing the same identity conflicts brought about by racism, they also face the added pressure of being encouraged to conform to a patriarchal (male biased) view of women. This latter pressure also reinforces the European stereotypes and myths

about beauty and negative self-images that hold back both Black young men and women.

## Role Models and Identity

A Health Education Authority study found that:

*“Parents, and particularly mothers, were an important source of self-esteem for all children, but their differing views of what life would hold for boys and girls influenced their children’s expectation.”*  
(Boseley, 1995)

The Black community has actively invested in the racial stereotypes that portray Black as evil, ugly and in particular as failures. It has led to a situation where in Britain today over 51% of Black males shy away from forming relationships with Black women, and are involved in a mixed race relationship.



Bessie Blount, a physical therapist treated soldiers during World War 2. She invented an electrical device that allowed wounded soldiers to feed themselves from a tube.

This was not always the case. During the 1970s racial tensions in the inner city was an effective deterrent to cross cultural relationships. A small but growing dual heritage (mixed race) young people found that they were rejected by whites and either admired or despised by some Black people.

Indeed the Euro-centric standard for Black beauty was also being reinforced by dual heritage young people and women in particular. The Black media added to it with publications like Black Hair & Beauty, Ebony and Roots which portrayed beauty in terms of light skin, thin lips, small nose and straight hair.

### Economic Exploitation and Black Mental Health

The historical imposition of poverty on Black people through the removal of their properties, disruption and even destruction of their economy and the removal of

people into slavery; has a negative impact on Black mental health. Poverty produces stress which, when coupled with racial stereotyping becomes a key factor in the cause of mental ill health amongst Black people.

Many Black people despair at the situation in which the Black community finds itself. They have witnessed the rise in the use of dangerous narcotics such as crack cocaine, and with it the rapid rise of the Black-on-Black gun culture.

This gun culture is fed by the negative lifestyles of African-American Rap artists and the 'shoot that niggah, slap that bitch' lyrics that make up their songs. Violence by young Black men on young Black women is on the increase.

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"The key to black mental health is black self-knowledge...Knowing who we are is the source of health knowledge and will be the source of power" [Dr. Na'im Akbar, quoted in The Voice, 31 January 1989]

However the trans-Atlantic lifestyles and music of the African Americans are not the cause of today's crisis among Black British youths. The crisis, as explained above, has its roots in the racial oppression of Black people worldwide.

The failure of second generation African-Caribbean parents to provide adequate guidance and support left the door open for negative influences to enter more quickly and direct the lives of Black youngsters unopposed. Parents have failed to teach their children about the history of Black people and Britain, from the ancient civilizations of Africa to the era of Roman Britain to the present day. Parents have failed to teach themselves about the historical contributions of Black people.

The need for Black people to debate racism and mental wellbeing is long overdue. The need for everyone to embrace Black history; learn

where the roots of modern day discrimination first began to grow; learn how this impacts on Black and White alike – and society can begin to move forward to ensure that the prejudices of future generations is influenced by non-racist application of history in the school curriculum.

Tackling institutional racism within society requires an appreciation of the historical contributions of Black people to British society, industry, wealth and standing in the world.

It also requires legislation that works. Racism in all institutions and in the neighbourhoods only thrives because its perpetrators retain an ignorant yet inherent sense of racial superiority, and its victims, in the main, retain a sense of racial inferiority fuelled by ignorance of their history and its impact on the society in which they live.

Article by David Bennett  
(Black History Month Group Chair)

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Wolverhampton or other sponsors involved in the production of this programme.

*The absence of the father figure had a profound impact on the emotional well-being of young Black males. Without fathers many boys looked elsewhere for male role models.*

# BLACK HISTORY

## Planning an event for Black History Month 2017?

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, Penedeford,  
Wolverhampton, WV8 1YD.

Moblie : 07806 461828  
Email: [Blacklocalhistory@live.co.uk](mailto:Blacklocalhistory@live.co.uk)

Why not log onto [blackhistoryandheritage.com](http://blackhistoryandheritage.com). You can find out about Black History Month events taking place in Wolverhampton this year.

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 magazines and would encourage you to pass it on to other to read when you have finished with it.

We welcome any comments, compliments or criticism 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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