

BASA

(Black & Asian Studies Association)

NEWSLETTER



Abd el-Ouahed Ben Messaoud ben Mohammed Anoun, ambassador to England from Barbary. Was he Shakespeare's 'noble Moor'? See p. 15

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This issue of the Newsletter has been delayed because of discussions about its future and the direction of BASA in general. It has now been agreed that in 2012 the Management Committee will be dissolved and replaced by two new groups, an **Education Committee** and an **Editorial Board**. The Education Committee will focus on the need to continue developing the teaching, research and dissemination of African and Asian histories at all levels. The Editorial Board will determine the future of BASA's communications. BASA has previously produced a printed Newsletter, but in the future this could potentially be replaced by a website, an ejournal, a blog or something yet to be imagined.

BASA is seeking people with interests in African and Asian history and heritage to help shape its future and work with these two forums.

Volunteers with interests and skills in writing, editing, research and digital media

are needed to set-up the editorial board. The current editor, Kathleen Chater, is standing down.

The education committee will benefit from people with backgrounds and interest in teaching (at all levels), advocacy and campaigning.

Both forums need volunteers who are dedicated and will be able to commit the time and energy required to make the changes.

If you are interested in joining the new team please contact Selma Elrayah at <srayah@hotmail.com>

Former BASA Committee member and Secretary Sean Creighton has been producing a regular British Black History Digest since September 2011. This contains details of events and news, and will increasingly include short articles. If you would like to receive the Digest please email Sean on <sean.creighton@btinternet.com>

Diary Dates

BASA member Miranda Kaufmann will be giving a number of talks over the next couple of months:

9 October 2012, 7 pm, **Africans in Britain 1500-1640**, illustrated talk, Minet Library, Lambeth.

19 October 2012, 6.30pm, **Readers Research: Black in Renaissance Britain**, British Library.

23 October 2012, 7pm, **African musicians and Renaissance royal celebrations**, Peckham Library.

16 November 2012, 2pm, **From the Spanish Caribbean to rural Gloucestershire: the strange journey of 'Edward Swarthy alias negro', an African in Elizabethan England**, The National Archives, Kew

21 November 2012, 4pm, **Africans in 16th century Scotland**, Centre for African Studies Seminar, Edinburgh University.

For more information, go to Miranda's website <www.mirandakaufmann.com/history.html>

The Slave-Owners of Bloomsbury

Alongside Bloomsbury's associations with literary and cultural gentility runs a less comfortable story of exploitation and oppression, with many British colonial slave-owners settling in the area's streets and squares in the 18th and 19th centuries. But slavery was only part of the connections between Africans and the area, and the exhibition also celebrates these other African presences. An exhibition and two workshops are being presented at Holborn Library by the Legacies of British Slave-ownership Project at UCL (<www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs>)

The exhibition runs from 1 October-12 November 2012 on the 2nd floor of the Library. The workshops will also be held there on Saturday 6 October 2-4pm and Saturday 3 November 2-4pm. To book a place at a workshop, please email lbs@ucl.ac.uk

Medieval Travellers: Perceptions and Prejudices

Tessa Hosking

During the 12th and 13th centuries an unprecedented number of travellers ventured out of Europe, the steady stream of pilgrims to the Holy Land being joined by armies of crusaders.

Medieval Europe was imbued with Christianity, and Christendom was a more recognisable concept than Europe. It is not surprising therefore that a sense of both religious superiority and shared identity with Christian people outside Europe comes across in the writings of European travellers. What can, however, seem surprising to modern minds, conditioned by 500 years of notions of 'race', is the apparent lack of what we would now term racial prejudice. In a pilgrim narrative recounting a visit to the Holy Land just after the arrival in Syria of the first crusaders, we even find a somewhat confused religious tolerance:

We spent one night in [a village where lived] many Christians and Saracens [i.e. Muslims] ... and were well received by the Christians there, and rising early on the following morning we went to Bethlehem. And the chief of the Saracens, armed, escorted us as far as Bethlehem and conducted us all round those places; otherwise we should not have reached [them]... because of the pagans, for Saracens abound and carry on brigandage in those mountains.

In crusade sources, attention is focused on the Muslim forces ranged against the western armies, and the language used is, as one would expect, frequently hostile. Yet it is clear that many crusaders, such as this eye-witness of the First Crusade, admired some of the Muslim soldiers:

The Turks ... have a saying that they are of common stock with the Franks, and that no men, except the Franks and themselves, are naturally born to be knights. This is true, ... if only they had stood firm in the faith of Christ ... you could not find stronger or braver or more skilful soldiers.

During the Third Crusade, Richard the Lionheart famously carried on negotiations with his counterpart Salah al-Din in an apparent spirit of mutual civility, distrust and respect. According to the eye-witness

who wrote the *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, however, this subtle diplomacy was lost on his followers:

Saphadin entrapped the overly credulous king with his shrewdness and deceived him with smooth words, so that at last they seemed to develop a sort of mutual friendship. The king was happy to receive gifts ... and messengers kept running back and forth between them bearing little presents ... His people felt that the king was open to considerable criticism for this, and it was said to be sinful to contract friendship with Gentiles.

Again, it is religion that is the line in the sand.



13th century book illustration, produced in Baghdad by al-Wâsifî, Yahyâ ibn Mahmûd, showing a group of Muslim pilgrims on a hajj. The Yorck Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei on wikicommons.

It is noticeable that crusade sources make virtually no mention of the actual appearance of their adversaries - until it comes to black Africans. Then references vary from the matter-of-fact: 'About five hundred Turks, Arabs, and black Ethiopians [...] fled into the Tower of David', to the highly dramatic, as in this extract from the *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*:

As the third hour approached the huge Turkish multitude - around 10,000 of

them - came charging down on our people at swift gallop! With a confusion of cries they eagerly threw darts and fired arrows, making a terrifying racket. After these ran a demon-like race [gens larvalis], very black in colour, who for this reason have a not inappropriate name: because they are black, they are called the people of black colour [Nigreduli]. Also there were the Saracens who travel the desert, popularly called 'Bedouins': wild and darker than soot, the most redoubtable infantrymen, carrying bows and quivers and round shields. They are a very energetic and agile people.

There is obviously reference here to the European connotation of demons, or the devil, as black. What I think it is doing, however, is intensifying the evil image of the enemy as a whole, rather than marking out black Africans as more evil than the rest. The purpose of the language is to convey the dramatic impression made on the writer by the relatively unfamiliar sight of regiments of Nubian and Bedouin soldiers - an impact that would be all the greater on readers back home in Europe.

Recounting his experiences of the Seventh Crusade in Egypt, the writer Joinville gives a comprehensive and sympathetic description of 'what kind of people the Bedouins are', ending with their appearance:

Nearly all of them wear a long tunic like the surplice worn by priests. Their heads are all bound round with cloths that go underneath the chin, so that, what with these and the jet-black colour of their hair and beards, they are an ugly people, and frightful to look at.

Interestingly, Joinville does not refer to the colour of the Bedouins' skin, but only to their hair. And from the rest of his comments, it is clear that his dislike of their appearance is not a judgement on them as a whole.

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Finally, a very different image of an African is provided by a participant in the Fourth Crusade. Before the conquest of Constantinople, some crusading nobles were visiting the Emperor of Byzantium when there arrived at the palace 'a king ... whose skin was all black'. 'When the emperor saw him coming, he rose to meet him and did great honour to him', explaining, "'This is the king of Nubia, who is come on pilgrimage to this city"'. The king then told them that:

his land was a hundred days' journey still beyond Jerusalem. He wanted to go on pilgrimage to Rome and ... St. James, and then come back to Jerusalem, if he should live so long, and then die there. And he said all the people of his land were Christians. And the barons gazed at this king with great wonder.

Half a century later, the Franciscans John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck were among a few intrepid friars who made extraordinary journeys across Asia in search of the Mongols, a people of whom western Christendom had only just become aware. From their narratives, Europe gained a unique insight into the society, culture and religion of many of the peoples of Asia, for unlike pilgrims or crusaders, they were intent on explaining as much as they could about the people they encountered.

Carpini, who travelled as envoy of the pope, gives exhaustive descriptions of the Mongols' religion and lifestyle, admiring some things, such as the competence and the chastity of women, but dismissive of others, such as their shamanistic beliefs. When he comes to describe their appearance, however, he is objective:

In appearance the Tartars [Mongols] are quite different from all other men, for they are broader than other people between the eyes and across the cheek-bones ... almost all are of medium height. ... On the top of their head they have a tonsure like clerics.

Rubruck, as a missionary for King Louis IX of France, was uncritical of the Mongols' religious beliefs, tried to understand their outlook on life, and could even admire their food. He was not afraid, however, to express dislike:

The women are astonishingly fat. The less nose one has, the more beautiful she is considered; and they disfigure

themselves horribly, moreover, by painting their faces. ... [The commander Scacatai] was seated on a couch with a guitar in his hand and his wife beside him. I was really under the impression that she had amputated the bridge of her nose so as to be more snub-nosed, for she had no trace of a nose there, and she had smeared that spot and her eyebrows as well with some black ointment, which to us looked dreadful.

Rubruck is acknowledging that beauty is culturally determined: while he considers Mongol women to be fat and ugly, this is just his opinion, or perhaps by inference European opinion, but it is not universal.



Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Married Mongolian woman in ancient national dress by Idamsurun.

Few European merchants travelled beyond the edges of the Mediterranean and fewer still left written records. Marco Polo's record of his *Travels*, which covered vast areas of Asia in the late 13th century, is therefore uniquely valuable, despite some unreliable passages. Though people are not Polo's chief interest, he makes revealing observations on the way of life and appearance of many of the different peoples he encounters. These are often brief, such as:

[In Kashmir] the inhabitants are brown-skinned and thin; the women are very beautiful, with such beauty as goes with a brown skin.

But in a passage on Malabar, he relates, without comment, a custom which

confronts the significance attached to colour directly:

It is a fact that when a child is born they anoint him once a week with oil of sesame, and this makes him grow much darker than when he was born. For I assure you that the darkest man is here the most highly esteemed and considered better than the others who are not so dark. ... [And] these people portray and depict their gods and their idols black and their devils as white as snow. For they say that God and all the saints are black and the devils are all white.

I think it is clear, from even these few examples of the recorded perceptions of travellers, that Europeans in the 12th and 13th centuries did not consider physical appearance to be a marker of human worth. In other words, when people from different parts of the world met, they did not see each other through race-tinted spectacles.

Tessa Hosking

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The Chinese in Victorian England

Jeffrey Green

Reading Anthony Shang on the Chinese in London, I was struck by his statement 'The first Chinese laundry in London opened in Poplar in 1901, and ten years later east London had thirty Chinese-run laundries'. Colin Holmes had written that 'the first Chinese laundry on Merseyside, opened in 1887' and that six percent of the Chinese in London in 1901 were employed in laundry and washing service occupations.

Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez said of that 'the great Chinese national industry [in New York] is laundrying'. Benton and Gomez also say that Liverpool had one Chinese laundry in 1890 and 63 in 1906. Chinese laundries are firmly fixed in the British subconscious through two matters which seem to have been ignored.

Stereotypes

The popular entertainer George Formby (1904-1961) sold many copies of a series of popular records, including 'Chinese Laundry Blues', recorded in 1932; 'The Wedding of Mr Wu' (Wu was the laundryman) of 1933; 'I'm the Husband of the Wife of Mr Wu' and 'Mr Wu's a Window Cleaner Now' (both 1939) and 'Mr Wu's an Air-raid Warden now' (1942). An earlier and still present image is in the pantomime *Aladdin* which has a scene set in a Chinese laundry. Widow Twankey is played in drag, and is always Chinese despite the Arabic associations. She was earlier called Widow Ching-Ching and first appeared in the show in 1861. Assisting her in the laundry was Wishee-Washy.

Presenting a Chinese image around Britain's theatres, *Aladdin* was not the only aspect of popular culture that deserves study, for there was a Chinese boy detective named Ching-Ching whose exploits were published in the *Boys' Standard*, founded 1875. There was a *Ching-Ching's Own* volume from 1888 to 1890, perhaps later.

Images of Chinese males with pigtails (plait) seem to have been widespread in Victorian Britain, which explains why the artist and illustrator Ernest Shepard, when meeting a Chinese youth in Highgate, north London in 1887, wondered if he was really

Chinese as he had no pigtail. The other popular image the general population had was of Chinese sailors in ports, most notably London and Liverpool. The East London Cemetery had a section for Chinese graves: a Chinese sailor's funeral here involved 'about six' fellow countrymen in November 1880 and a burial noted in 1890 was of a ship's fireman, Lung Chung. Two colleagues accompanied the body to the cemetery.

There were disputes between Chinese sailors which were reported in the press, such as an altercation involving 13 seamen in February 1878, which one newspaper called the 'Chinese riot in London'. Another went further, saying it was a 'Chinese war in East London'. One sailor was stabbed in North Woolwich in October 1874.

Political and military inks

The Times of 30 March and 16 May 1881 listed diplomats attending Queen Victoria's court at Buckingham Palace, including 'Admiral Ting Joo-chang, of the Chinese Imperial Navy'. He was in England to inspect new ships in Newcastle. Chinese diplomats represented China in several European cities and the London legation, opened in 1877, was at 49 Portland Place. The ambassador and his wife were called the Marquis and Marchioness Tseng by the British. In March 1886 they and their daughters greeted nearly a thousand guests at the legation. The *Pall Mall Gazette* commented on their fluency in English. These links had results.

On 1 December 1885 *The Times* announced Armstrong's yard was to build two fast cruisers for the Chinese Navy. By 1887 the Chinese Navy possessed the fastest torpedo boat of any navy – built in Poplar, East London, where it had been

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His website is <www.jeffreygreen.co.uk>

inspected by the ambassador and his colleagues. It and four larger vessels (two built in Newcastle, two in Germany) left England in August 1887. *The Times* noted that during the two months 'or more' the crews had spent in Newcastle, their behaviour had been excellent. There were nineteen Chinese studying engineering and naval architecture at the Royal Naval College, Portsmouth, in the summer of 1886 and in early 1888 a Chinese group arrived in England to study military equipment and methods.



Plaque commemorating Sun Yat-Sen at Warwick Court, 8 Gray's Inn Place, London, WC1.
(Photo: P. Ingerson on Wikimedia Commons)

Sun Yat-sen in Britain

Plans to overthrow the Manchu (Qing) dynasty organised in Canton in 1895 had been dealt with by the imperial authorities. Sun Yat-sen, trained in medicine in Hong Kong after a Christian education in Hawaii had been a major figure in this agitation and when he reached Liverpool (travelling via Japan and the U.S.A.) on 30 September 1896 he was followed by a private detective hired by the Chinese Legation in London. Sun met Dr James Cantlie who had taught him in Hong Kong and was now living near the Legation. The two met most days until 11 October.

Aware Sun was visiting the sights and working at the British Museum, Cantlie was not disturbed to have no news until late on 17 October when a note was pushed under his door stating Sun was imprisoned in the Legation. Cantlie went to the police, visited the Foreign Office and the Legation. No

British official could enter the legation without an invitation so detectives kept it under surveillance. There were also police observers keeping a watch on ships scheduled to sail to China. The sole London-China direct shipping company (the Glen line, famed for employing Chinese sailors) told the police Chinese officials had approached them as they had a 'lunatic' to return home. Lord Salisbury, prime minister and foreign secretary, sent a brusque note to the Legation stating Sun's detention was 'an abuse of the diplomatic privilege accorded to a foreign Representative. I have, therefore, the honour to request that Sun Yatsen may be at once released'.

The sensational story that a Christian Chinaman had been kidnapped on the streets of London and was imprisoned in the Legation was a scoop by the *London Globe* and it was copied by major London newspapers. Chinese officials said there was no such individual at the Legation. Crowds gathered outside – missiles were thrown at Chinese servants and a dead cat hit the cook (raising questions today about hygiene and rubbish collection in 1890s London). Cantlie assured the press Sun Yatsen was British, having been born in Hong Kong. Upwards of one thousand people waited in Portland Place but the prisoner emerged from the side entrance in Weymouth Street on 23 October 1896. The news was also published in Australia, Singapore, the U.S.A., Hong Kong and Japan.

As well as the minister Gong Zhaoyuan there were nine Chinese officials and ten or twelve servants (the cleaners were English). Gong had been told by the Chinese Legation in the U.S.A. the revolutionary was on his way to Britain. The publicity and interference from all manner of Britons was not anticipated. In January 1897 *Kidnapped in London: Being the Story of my Capture by, detention at, and release from the Chinese Legation, London* was published in Bristol. Cantlie wrote it.

The British heard of the need for reform in China by interviews, portraits (Sun wore English clothes and had removed his pigtail), statements such as 'here in England a human being, even though he be a Chinaman, has certain inalienable rights' . there was even a ballad, published in the Sun newspaper 'well, bl'me, this is cheek fer

ter come and go and sneak a feller wot's a-walkin' in the streets o' London than'.

Throughout the first part of 1897 Sun addressed public meetings, attended events such as the National Bicycle Show, toured museums and institutions including the London docks and the zoo. He departed from Liverpool in July 1897. His months in London were a propaganda coup for Chinese reformists. The incident stayed fresh in the memories of many and reinforced negative attitudes to imperial China. Sun became the leader of the Revolutionary Alliance which overthrew the regime in 1911 and became the first President of the Chinese Republic. He died in 1925 and was a hero to Chinese people for generations. Benton and Gomez do not list Wong's study of Sun Yatsen, and they missed the wonders of the junk *Keying* which they note was in England in the 1850s.

One of the *Keying's* crew posed as a mandarin and joined the honoured guests (including the Duke of Wellington) and met Queen Victoria when she opened the Great Exhibition in London in 1851. He later posed for a painting of the event, and then worked in a tea shop. There were other, lower-profile Chinese people in Britain. Merchants sold tea in Britain. Others appear in legal cases, but there were problems in law courts when Chinese witnesses would not swear on the Bible, but broke plates. More spectacularly, there was the 'Chinese Giant' Chang Woo Gow who spent his final years in Bournemouth where he died in 1893.

I contributed the first two entries on Chinese people in Britain in the My *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry. The first was the wealthy John Hochee (1789-1869) who lived in 1820s Hertfordshire and later in rural Surrey. His doctor son lived in Finchley, north London into the 1890s. The second was on Ping Lun (c. 1861-1904), who murdered laundry owner Go Hing in Liverpool.

The history of the Chinese contribution to 19th century Britain is richer and more complex than 'salt to soap' (sailing, laundries) or the opium dens mentioned by Charles Dickens in his *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. By widening the search to include comics, theatrical presentations for children, armaments contracts, the roles of diplomats, cemeteries, and the unexpected

(Shepherd's memoirs, the ballad in the *Sun*) we gain a broader picture of Chinese people in Victorian Britain.

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Others

For the portrait of the fake mandarin, see 'Sources for Black and Asian History', p 17 on <www.westminster.gov.uk>

Image 03-08-03/22 of Lessing Photo Archives shows the *Keying* with the British red ensign on the foremast.

The National Archives FO 17/0718

Within Paving the Empire Road

Darrell M. Newton

(This is the talk about his book that Darrell M. Newton was going to deliver on 5 July 2012 as part of Marika Sherwood's seminar series at the Institute of Commonwealth studies. As this was not possible, it is being published here. *Editor.*)

Paving the Empire Road: BBC Television and Black Britons is an institutional case study of the BBC Television Service, as it undertook the responsibility of creating programmes that addressed the impact of black Britons, their attempts to establish citizenship within England, and subsequent issues of race relations and colour prejudice. Beginning in the 1930s and into the post millennium, I provide a historical analysis of policies invoked, and practices undertaken as the Service attempted to assist white Britons in understanding the impact of African-Caribbeans, and their assimilation into constructs of Britishness. Management soon approved talks and scientific studies as a means of examining racial tensions, though not in England herself.

As ITV challenged the discourses of British broadcasting, and BBC 2 began broadcasting in 1964, more issues of racial relations appeared on the screens of viewers, each reflecting sometimes comedic, somewhat dystopic, often problematic circumstances of inter-culturalism. In the years that followed however, social tensions led to transmissions that included a series of news specials on Britain's Colour Bar, and docudramas such as *A Man from the Sun* (BBC, Tx, 11 June 1956) that attempted to frame the immigrant experience for British television audiences, but from the West Indian point of view.

Despite these efforts, many West Indians making the transition toward citizenship continued to feel isolated from mainstream British society. As the BBC moved further into television broadcasting, the organisation and its managers drew from ideologies of nationalism that continued to place the African-Caribbean settler in a position marginalised from the imagined mainstream of English culture. As

evidenced by the work of Stephen Bourne and Jim Pines, various actors of Afro-Caribbean origin have chronicled their struggles within British television. However, the concerns of 'typical coloured folk,' as the League of Coloured Peoples called them, eventually came to the attention of management through a series of community meetings. These assemblies brought management together with these new citizens to determine what they were experiencing, and how best help them and define their lives and experiences in England. As an example, BBC's Director General Hugh Greene called upon leaders of London's West Indian, Pakistani, and Indian communities in 1965 to discuss ways the Television Service could better serve their needs as new citizens. These 'public conferences' created possibilities within a social and institutional environment that had been foreshadowed by social tensions, some of which were examined by programming; yet seldom from the perspective of West Indians themselves. After gauging the opinions of these groups, management, with support from the Director General, could hypothetically develop better policies, and programmes, that addressed the transitions and challenges undertaken by these peoples.

Though sources carefully discuss the development of the BBC and its massive influence, there are seldom discussions about how ethnicity as a focus of management practices, shaped television programming, and policy-making before the turbulent 1960s. This study therefore discusses how the BBC ultimately drew upon various African-Caribbean organisations to serve as advisors, and coordinators in these efforts, helping, in large part, to shape the future of British

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television. This includes portions of discussions, transcripts, and programming notes in the words of participants and Black Britons themselves. Subsequent chapters include a more extensive analysis of television and radio programming, along with personal interviews. Topics include representations of race, and ethnicity as related to immigrant cultures in post-WWII England, the future of British television and multiethnic audiences. This also includes the contemporary efforts of Black Britons recently working within the British media as employees of the BBC, writers, producers, and actors.

Historically, what concerns did West Indian organisations express, and what suggestions made as the BBC continued to shape its programming choices in relation to race and immigration? How did the political climate of the time affect internal decisions made by BBC management when considering the subject of race relations within its programming decisions? How could the voices of these new citizens be heard and their desires for social enhancement known? What affect does this absence of these voices have upon a historical study of BBC television, representations of race, and the canonical formation of programming texts?



The BBC's Written Archives Centre at Caversham, Berkshire, has some 12 million items and is one of the largest media archives in the world.

I used the documents in the BBC Written Archive Centre (WAC) to examine these questions but also found they provided

evidence of how broadcast policies concerning racial issues often vacillated and changed, depending upon a range of issues. As images of race and West Indian culture appeared on television, limited social relations between whites and coloureds held these discursive subjects in place, in part by the BBC's own authoritarian, sociological, and ideological influences. The initiation of procedures aimed at racial fairness and social responsibility were dependent largely upon the whims and directives of department heads, producers, and their assistants. Memoranda, letters, and corresponding policy decisions each provide a useful indicator for the social environment of the day, as did original radio and television scripts addressing issues as diverse as Calypso routines for variety shows, to the riots at Notting Hill. Archived viewer research reports, were invaluable as historical narratives demonstrating the cultural saliency of the Service and its efforts to address the contemporary presence of black Britons during the 1950s, and beyond. These reports often drove programming decisions made during the years in question, underscoring the importance of these documents as resources. These documents and others in the study never completely and irrefutably reflect actual attitudes held by the viewing public or management in the years collated, but they do provide an indication. It would also be difficult to reconstruct this programming critically using mere transcripts and synopses; however, this study examines some of this material and highly important decisions undertaken by management about such programming. Additional research methodology includes the textual analysis of multiple BBC television programmes beginning in the 1950s until beyond 2000, including dramas, sitcoms, documentaries, and news magazines. Whilst this method of research also requires semiotic analysis of representations cast by BBC producers and writers, written documents provide an insight into the underscoring of difference and subjectivity that resulted when programming analysed the impact of West Indian immigration.

(Paving the Empire Road is reviewed on p. 34)

Heritage Lottery grant

Arthur Torrington is pleased to announce that the Windrush Foundation has received a confirmed grant of £238,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the **EMANCIPATION 1838 project**.

The project will mark on 1st August 2013 the 175th anniversary of the emancipation of nearly a million African people and people of African descent in the Caribbean. It is also about celebrating those who resisted enslavement, those who fought to end it, and others who worked in Britain and the Caribbean for a better social, economic, and political situation for Caribbean people.

The project will create a website, educational material and present two heritage exhibitions (temporary and touring in 2013) to tell the stories of emancipation and its legacies, using original documents, objects, graphic panels, etc. The touring exhibitions will visit libraries, and other venues. It is hoped that an understanding and appreciation of this history and heritage will assist the development of identity among young people and will foster better race and community relations.

Neo-soul artist Omar honoured

Omar was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the Queen's 2012 Birthday Honours List for his services to music. Of Chinese, African and Indo-Jamaican descent, Omar Lye Fook was born in London and grew up in Canterbury, Kent. He studied trumpet, piano and percussion. After spending two years at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester he went on to the Guildhall School of Music in London. Despite his classical training, he has become what some call 'the father of British neo soul'. His first album was released in 1990 and he has recently branched out into acting and voice-overs.

Ayuba Suleiman Diallo goes on tour

The first known portrait of a Black African Muslim and freed slave is to go on

tour from the National Portrait Gallery in London, where it is on long-term loan from the Orientalist Museum, a member of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA).

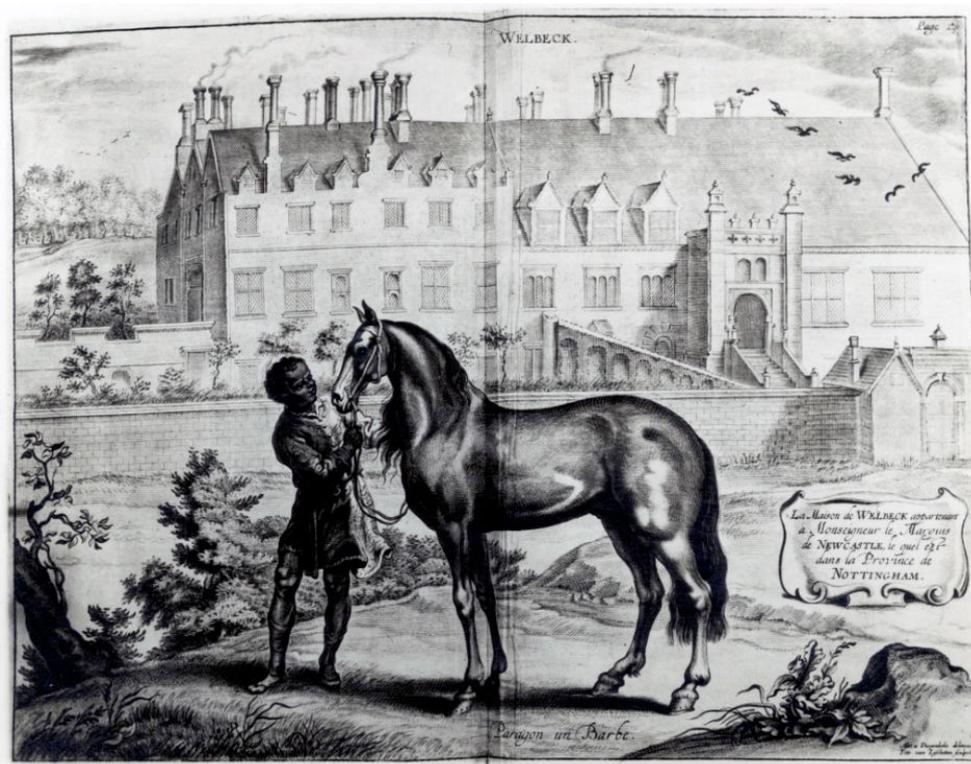


The painting of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, also known as Job Ben Solomon, was painted by William Hoare of Bath in 1733.

The tour started in June at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum, where it will remain until 23 September 2012. The portrait then moves on to South Shields Museum and Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (29 September 2012 – 9 March 2013) and goes finally to the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester (6 April – 30 June 2013).

Regional research

A project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council will run from February to October 2012. ***Historicising and reconnecting rural community: black presences and the legacies of slavery and colonialism in rural Britain, c.1600-1939*** is based in Nottingham University. The project aims to undertake a review of work on black presences and the histories of slavery and colonialism in rural Britain.



Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire was the seat of the Dukes of Portland.

The project is particularly focused on the scoping of sources (archival, material and performative) on rural histories and the legacies of slavery and colonialism in the East Midlands and East Anglia. This will cover Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland in the Midlands and, to a slightly more limited extent, in East Anglia, Cambridgeshire, part of Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. In drawing together sources, with help from researchers and from archival and heritage organisations, the project hopes to stimulate and enable further research and memory work/heritage projects on black histories in rural parts of the East of England, which has received less attention than other regions. Alongside this historical scoping work, the project organisers aim to review and develop work on how histories and legacies of slavery and colonialism are being used today. In doing so, it is hoped to bring researchers, heritage organisations and 'community' groups together to discuss how to take such future work forward. A website is just being developed.

We Face Forward is an exhibition, featuring the work of 33 West African artists from 11 West African Countries, being presented across several galleries (the Whitworth, Manchester Art Gallery, Museum of Costume and Football Museum) which will be running until 16 September. The title comes from historic links between West Africa and Manchester. This was taken from a ground-breaking political speech given by Kwame Nkrumah in 1960, immediately prior to his election as the first president of newly independent Ghana. At that time Nkrumah stated, '*We face neither East nor West; we face forward*' - an echo of similar sentiments he had expressed about his hopes for a decolonised, unified and future-oriented Africa when addressing fellow delegates at the 5th Pan-African Congress held in Manchester during 1945.

Carol Dixon went and found it refreshing to see a series of exhibitions focused on contemporary arts and very modern representations of the lived experiences, cultural politics, economic issues and environmental concerns facing the nations of West Africa today. She thought the stand-out pieces in this very eclectic series of contemporary art exhibitions were the

installation artworks created by Barthélémy Toguo - a Cameroon-born artist who currently lives and works between Cameroon, France and the USA - and Benin's Romuald Hazoumé; the studio portraits by award-winning Malian photographer Malick Sidibé; and the vast textile sculptures created by Nigeria's Victoria Uddondian (who completed the work *'Aso Ikele (1948)'* as a new commission for the Whitworth Art Gallery), El Anatsui (whose complex composition constructed out of recycled pieces of aluminium and copper, titled *'In the World But Don't Know The World'* (2009), dominated the main exhibition hall at Manchester Art Gallery) and Australian-born Nnenna Okore's delicately woven lengths of burlap, dye and acrylic assembled to form her abstract wall-hanging *'When the Heavens Meet the Earth'* (2011).



Le Monde Journalistique, 2011 by Amadou Sanogo at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester.

Her only reservations were that, even with the substantial inclusion of contemporary photography and video art, examples of some of the most interesting innovations by groups of creatives and whole collectives of arts activists and practitioners were missing. 'The Congolese Sapeurs', for example, is an urban fashion, performance and body-art happening that began in the working-class streets of downtown Kinshasa and has now spread throughout the African diaspora to become an internationally-recognised art and design movement. There are also very few women artists represented. Five out of 33 is disappointing for a future-focused, city-wide,

contemporary cultural festival titled "We Face Forward".

Queen of the Undead

An exhibition of paintings by Kimathi Donkor, **Queens of the Undead**, opens on 13 September 2012 at Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts), Rivington Place, London EC2A 3BA,, and closes on 24 November 2012. This exhibition includes a series of new commissions by the artist celebrating heroic black women from history, shown alongside and selected earlier works. Research texts written by curator/ writers David Dibosa (Chelsea College of Art & Design) and Carol Tulloch (University of the Arts) are displayed alongside the paintings, adding context and making reference to histories which might not be so apparent. Kimathi Donkor's work is constructed through extensive research both into history and the ideologically loaded genres of Western oil painting. The artist explores portraiture, narrative and art historical themes in his paintings, creating a body of work often conceived in dialogue with other artists from David and Velazquez, to Sargent and Bowling. Of this exhibition, Kimathi Donkor says,

'These paintings resurrect the undead glory of charismatic black women who each helped define the modern world, and are revered as amazing armed heroines in their homelands - a lot like Joan of Arc. Of course, I enjoy quoting imagery from their own times, but I also want to reflect the turbulent power such old figures still exert on our contemporary imagination.'

A series of events exploring art's relationship to history and contemporary politics will accompany the exhibition. Check the website. Please note that PS2 may be closed on some Thursdays throughout the exhibition when we are hosting events. Call Rivington Place on 020 7749 1240 or for more information email <bookings@rivingtonplace.org>

Mr Donkor's painting *Toussaint Louverture at Bedourete* was exhibited a while ago and is now on display again as part of the Invisible Forces exhibition at the Furtherfield Gallery in Finsbury Park. For more information see www.furtherfield.org/programmes/exhibition/invisible-force



Dame Kelly Holmes' portrait goes on display

A new portrait of Double Olympic Champion Dame Kelly Holmes has gone on display at the National Portrait Gallery. The portrait is the work of artist Craig Wylie, and was commissioned as part of the First Prize in the *BP Portrait Award* competition at the Gallery in 2008.

Dame Kelly Holmes (b.1970) began athletics at the age of 12 in Tonbridge, Kent. She joined the British Army at the age of 17 and qualified as an HGV driver before training as a Physical Training Instructor. She left the army in 1992 as a sergeant after being awarded an MBE for Services to the British Army. During her time in the Army she had gone back to international athletics and in 1994 won the 1500m at the Commonwealth Games. Despite suffering several years of injury, Dame Kelly won medals at the Commonwealth Games, European Championships, World Championships and Olympic Games including a bronze medal at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. She achieved her ultimate ambition of winning Olympic gold twice in Athens in the 800m and 1500m. She retired from athletics in 2005 and in the same year was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. Dame Kelly is President of Commonwealth Games England and Official Ambassador for Team GB.

Craig Wylie (b. 1973) was born in Zimbabwe and studied Fine Art at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, graduating with distinction. He moved to London in 1998 and, after exhibiting at the

BP Portrait Award for three successive years he won First Prize in 2008. He has won other prizes for his work, and has exhibited internationally.

Shakespeare at the British Museum

A major exhibition on the world and works of William Shakespeare will run at the British Museum until 25 November 2012.

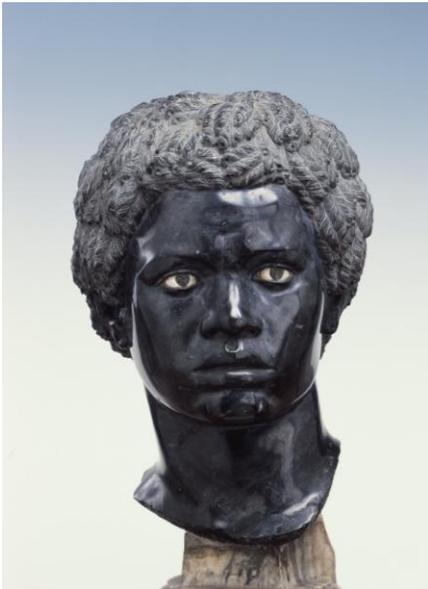
Shakespeare: staging the world looks at the emerging role of London as a world city four hundred years ago. It's not about the life of the playwright but about the world he lived in. It looks beyond London theatre-going to show the links to people, places and artefacts that illuminate our understanding of the beginnings of the modern world. This was period in which the world was circumnavigated, new civilisations were discovered and new trade routes with the East established.

As a number of the objects show, there was already a long-standing link between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. One of the earliest objects on display is a Greek bowl made between 450-420 BC which clearly displays an African woman in the role of Circe, offering a drugged drink to Odysseus.



The splendid portrait on the cover of this *Newsletter* is of an envoy sent from the court of Morocco to negotiate an alliance between England and Morocco against Spain. He may have been the inspiration for Shakespeare's 'noble Moor of Venice' Othello. Venice was the epitome for luxurious sophistication to Shakespeare and his contemporaries and among the exhibits from the city are several objects, which like

a marble bust of an African, show the contacts there were with Africa.



From the New World came artefacts like this statuette, made by the Taino people of Jamaica. It depicts a priest or shaman in a drugged-induced trance



The meaning for contemporaries of many of these artefacts can only be speculated about, but full descriptions and the theories about them can be found in the superb exhibition catalogue, published by the British Museum in paperback at £25.00.

There are a number of events related to the exhibition, including a free talk *Mask*

and masquerades: the art of transformation in Africa on 17 October 2012 at 13.15

Entrance to the exhibition is £14, but there is a range of concessions. Go to <britishmuseum.org> or call 020-7323 8181.

Julius Caesar in Africa



Paterson Joseph (Brutus) and Theo Ogunjipe (Soothsayer), photo by Kwame Lestrade

In the British Museum exhibition, Paterson Joseph is shown performing a speech from the current Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *Julius Caesar* in which he plays Brutus. This production has transferred from Stratford-upon-Avon to the Noel Coward Theatre, St Martin's Lane, London, where it will run as part of the Shakespeare Festival until 15 September 2012. Thereafter it is now touring Aylesbury, Bradford, Salford, Norwich and Cardiff. For dates and further information see <www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/julius-caesar/>.

Shakespeare's play about power struggles in ancient Rome is capable of myriad interpretations and locations. This urgent, compelling RSA production is set in modern day Africa.

(Editor's Review) As *Julius Caesar*, Jeffrey Kisson turns in a finely nuanced performance. There is incipient paranoia and growing illogicality, reminiscent of Amin, Mugabe, Bokassa and a whole host of other dictators, but this never becomes blatant insanity. How far are Brutus (Paterson Joseph) and the other conspirators justified in overthrowing a man who has three times refused the Crown of a republic? The play's exploration of arguments about when political assassination might be justified and the floodgates such killings unleash

makes it always relevant in some part of the world. To some extent this is very depressing – men have learned *nothing* since Roman times.

The production, however, is subtle, leaving a lot to the audience's knowledge of the political situation in Africa over the last fifty or so years. Without labouring the point, and betraying Shakespeare's even-handed ambiguity, the rebels, dressed in miscellaneous army fatigues, look like the socialist/communist forces that have flourished since the various countries achieved independence from the colonial powers. In his tent before the battle at Philippi Brutus reads from what looks like Chairman Mao's Little Red Book. Mark Antony (Ray Fearon) may not have arguments to deliver, but he has power and social stability to defend and uses rabble-rousing rhetoric to manipulate the plebs. His smartly uniformed troops, by implication well armed and well drilled, confront the divided rebels. As Lucius, Brutus's young servant turned bewildered child soldier, Simon Manyonda gives a comic and touching performance, reminding us of some of the victims of these conflicts. When some of Brutus's confederates flee, we understand they will become asylum seekers.

The rest of the all-Black cast are also superb. The formality of Shakespeare's language sits well with the speech of modern mission-educated Africans in a continent where learning and being able to speak impressively are highly valued. Occasionally, however, the demands of the iambic pentameter do not sit well with African or Caribbean accents or indeed with the younger actors who have not had much experience of verse-speaking. A slightly stronger performance from Ivanno Jeremiah as Octavius would have signalled that this is not the end. Although Octavius doesn't get much to say, Shakespeare's audience would know that this army officer is going to be the ultimate winner, the president-for-life, father-of-his-people, etc. We need to know that the power struggles will go on.

Bengal History Week

The Brick Lane Circle is organising its third annual history week programme, designed to help generate and expand interest in Bengal's history and to introduce historians

and scholars to new audiences in non-academic settings.

The week opens on 6 October 2012 at 2pm at the Brady Arts Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1 5HU with a traditional Bangladeshi Feast, followed by a pictorial presentation of historical Muslim buildings and sights of Bangladesh By Dr M Ahmedullah. Professor Mushtaq Khan, Professor of Economics at SOAS will give a talk on *The Failure of the Pakistan experiment in East Pakistan: Economic Growth and Political Crisis 1947-71*.

On 7 October, 2.30-4.30pm in Lab 3 of the Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1BU there will be a short film and presentation, *Rohingya: A Human Story*, by speakers from Restless Beings (<www.restlessbeings.org>). Next day, also in the Idea Store Whitechapel at 7pm, Dr John Stevens will present *Keshab Chandra Sen: The International Life of Bengal's Forgotten Prophet*. On 9 October it's back to the Idea Store at 7pm for a talk about *Bengali doctors, the legacy of Empire, the staffing of the NHS and the development of British general practice (1948 - 1983)* given by Julian Simpson.

On Wednesday 10 October, between 7-9pm there will be a panel discussion about the role of history in identity formation at the Jagonari Women's Centre, 183 -185 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DN. The panellists will be Dr Nazneen Ahmed, Dr Fuad Ali, Dr Georgie Wemyss and Ruhul Abidin. On 11 October, from 7-9pm in Lab 3, Idea Store Whitechapel, 321 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1BU Dr M. Abdul Mu'min Chowdhury will speak on *The Pals and Their Role in the Sanskritisation of Bengal*.

On 12 October 2012, 7-9pm at the Brady Arts Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1 5HU Ehtashamul Haque will speak about *Transnationalism and British Bangladeshi politics in the UK 1971-2011*.

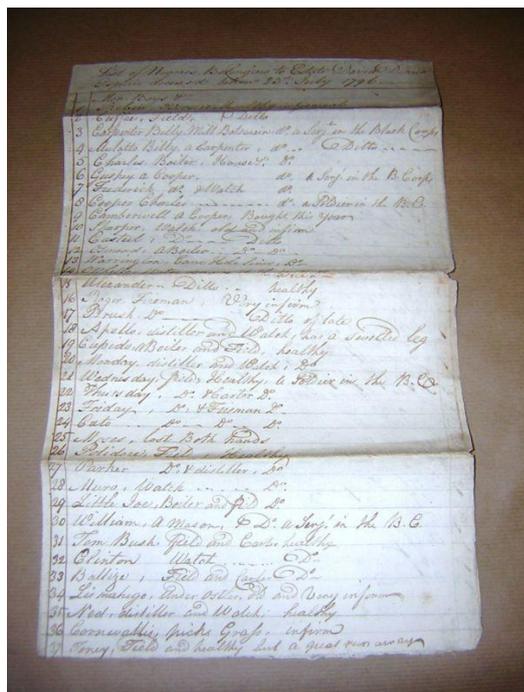
On Saturday 13 October 2012 at Brady Arts Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1 5HU between 2-6pm there will be a series of talks on recent political history in Bengal. Finally, to round off the week on 14 October, between 3-5pm back at the Idea Store Whitechapel, there will be a talk on the *Impacts of Moghul Rule in Bengal* by Tapan Raychaudhuri and from 7.00-8.30pm at the Rich Mix Centre, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA there will be the screening

of *Muhammad Ali Goes East: Bangladesh I love You*, a documentary film made in 1978, which records Muhammad Ali's tour of Bangladesh following his defeat in 1977 by Leon Spinks, which was directed by Reginald Massey.

For more details see <www.bricklanecircle.org> or to book a place at one of the events email <bricklanecircle@yahoo.co.uk>

1796 slave list

On ebay recently appeared a rare and interesting item. It was a manuscript 'List of Negroes Belonging to Estate David Dewar Esquire deceased, taken 23rd July 1796'. Unlike many slave lists it names all of the slaves, 136 in total, what their occupation was and their state of health and fitness. It also lists the deaths of slaves and cause of death since the last return.



William Dewar was a Scottish merchant in Edinburgh whose son George went to the West Indies, where he spent time in St Kitts and Dominica. In 1744 George Dewar was 'recognised' by the Lord Lyon King of Arms, and matriculated his arms at the Lyons Office in Edinburgh. On his return in 1782 from the West Indies, where he had substantial property, he purchased an estate at Doles in Hampshire. His elder son John became briefly an undistinguished MP for Cricklade while the younger son, David

(1748-1794), became Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire. John was disinherited for extravagance and David retained property in St Kitts and it is for him that this list was made. There is still a Dewars estate near Basseterre and recently the house was put up for sale.

It was not possible to discover the purchaser, but hopefully it was bought by a museum or archive where its full significance can be explored. Watch this space for further news.

History and the National Curriculum

On Saturday 6 October 2012 the Midlands History Forum is organising a one-day conference at the University of Birmingham on The Nature of History and the New National Curriculum. What should the purpose, content and outcomes of the new National Curriculum History be? What are the implications for Primary and Secondary schools? The conference will explore these and other related questions and, through workshops and discussion groups, provide a range of ideas to support classroom practice.

The Forum will be led by two guests – Jerome Freeman, former History Officer for QCDA/ Chair of the Historical Association Primary Committee and Ben Walsh, textbook writer and Deputy President of the Historical Association. The conference fee is £10 and it will be held at the School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

Further information from <http://mhfonline.info>. All enquiries to Paul Bracey, (01604) 892471 (day); (01788) 822993 (evening).

Black composer on film

The film *Black Mozart in Cuba* is a documentary about the life and works of Joseph Boulanger, Chevalier de Saint Georges, the son of a slave and her master, who was born in 1745 in Guadeloupe and died, virtually forgotten, in 1799 in Paris.

He was sent to an elite school in France, where he learned fencing and other military skills. But he also became an accomplished composer, violinist and conductor, was highly athletic and a military hero who led an army in the French Revolution. As well as finding fame in France, the Chevalier

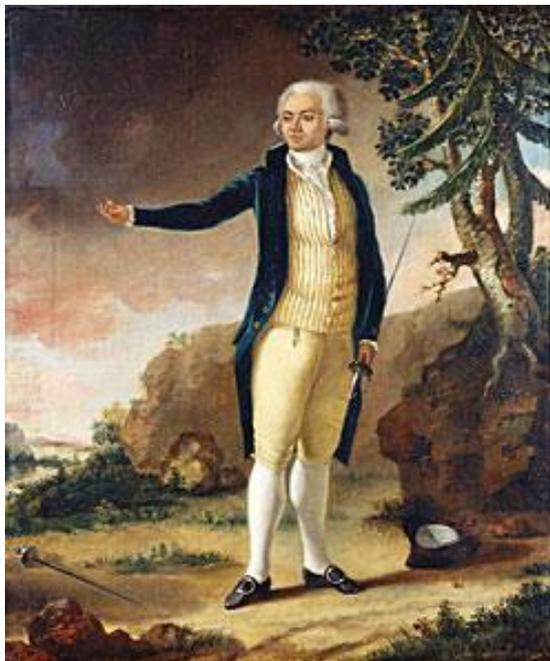
(which means 'knight') toured Europe and was feted as a superstar.



Still from *Black Mozart in Cuba*

He came to England in 1787. Here he mainly displayed his athletic prowess and, among other events, took part in a fencing match with the transvestite spy Charles 'Mademoiselle la Chevalière' d'Eon de Beaumont. This was at Carlton House 'in the presence of the Nobility and many eminent Fencing Masters of London.'

Carlton House was where the Prince of Wales, later George IV, lived and he may have commissioned the portrait below, which is now in the Royal Collection.



This documentary, in Spanish with English subtitles, was made by Stephanie James of Guadeloupe in 2006 and has appeared at a number of events since then, winning various prizes. Its British premiere was in

July but it doesn't seem to be available on DVD or streaming. Catch it when and where you can. In the meantime, quite a lot of Boulanger's music has been recorded. Although the soubriquet Black Mozart is a bit over-ambitious, his music is accomplished and charming.

Celebration of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's centenary (continued)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was Composer of the Week on Radio 3 in October 2004 and there are plans for another week to celebrate his works later this year. Although no date has yet been announced, the BBC Singers have recorded some material especially for this.

Jeffrey Green, who has done so much to research and promote Samuel-Coleridge-Taylor, will be visiting America in early October to speak at events organised there. Back in England, in September there will be a lunchtime concert on 11th at Fairfield's Halls in Croydon, when Waka Hasegawa will play Coleridge-Taylor's Valse Suite Three-Four, Op.71, Forest Scenes Op.66 (selections), Moorish Dance Op.55, and Cameos Op.56. On 9 November at the Ashcroft Theatre in Fairfield's Halls, Croydon, *Song for the World*, a musical celebrating the life of Samuel Coleridge Taylor, by composer Stella Coussell will be performed by local students from Studio 74. This was written especially for children aged between 8 and 12 and tells Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's rise to fame. For more information and to book tickets, go to <www.fairfield.co.uk/showhome.php>

On 30 September 2012 there is to be a gala concert in aid of Ashanti development in the Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7. The programme is to include: *Five Negro Melodies* for piano trio. For more information visit <www.ashanti-development.org>. Tickets are £30 from RCM Box Office, www.rcm.ac.uk/box_office.

A Celebration of the anniversaries of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and John Ireland (d. 1962) will be held in the Actors' Church in Covent Garden in London on 23 November 2012. Sylvie Bedouelle (mezzo-soprano), Gary Griffiths (baritone) and Nigel Foster (piano) will be performing and the concert is part of the London Song Festival. The programme includes SC-T's *Sorrow*

Songs, poems by Christina Rossetti, and *Songs of Sun and Shade*, poems by Radclyffe-Hall. For further information and to book go to <www.seetickets.com/Event/THE-LONDON-SONG-FESTIVAL/St-Pauls-Church-Covent-Garden/637865>.



Early publicity photograph taken before 1912 and published by Breitkopf & Hartel. (NPG)

A display documenting Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's increasing fame is on show at the **National Portrait Gallery** until 17 March 2012. It has an early publicity photo complete with facsimile signature, a picture showing him in a group image of fellow-composers (including Edward Elgar and Ethel Smyth) and his posthumous renown on a cigarette card. An intriguing oil study painted when he was a child is complemented by a stunning portrait by E.O Hope. Further information on <www.npg.org.uk/whatson/display/2012/samuel-coleridge-taylor-1875-1912.php>

Liverpool Biennial 2012

For ten weeks every two years the city of Liverpool hosts the largest international contemporary art festival in the UK. It showcases a range of artworks, projects

and a programme of events. Autograph ABP has commissioned John Akomfrah to create a new film, *The Unfinished Conversation*. It will premier at The Bluecoat as part of the **Liverpool Biennial 2012** (15 Sep - 25 Nov 2012). The film examines the nature of the visual as triggered across the individual's memory landscape, with particular reference to identity and race. In it, academic Stuart Hall's memories and personal archives are extracted and relocated in an imagined and different time, reflecting the questionable nature of memory itself. This multi-layered three-screen installation investigates the theory that identity is not an essence or being but instead a becoming, where individual subjectivities are formed in both real and fictive spaces.

For more information contact lois@autograph-abp.co.uk or call 020-7729 9200

See <liverpoolbiennial.co.uk> for the other festival events.

London Metropolitan Archives has added two more publications to its Information Leaflets series. No. 21 is ***Black Caribbean Community Archives at London Metropolitan Archives***. As well as detailing the on-line Black & Asian Londoners database, this leaflet lists individual family records of abolitionists and plantations owners in the colonies; missionary societies; City businesses, like the Bank of British West Africa; and small companies, like the Huntley archive and Bogle-l'Overture. Various grassroots movements, like the Anti-Apartheid movement, have also deposited archives there and, of course, the local authority and education records that can be accessed by researchers.

Another useful guide for researchers using primary sources is No. 22, ***Chinese Community Archives at London Metropolitan Archives***. These records cover subjects, from London County Council records relating to change of use of buildings, such as restaurants, within the Chinese community and the archives of businesses which traded in China. There's also a substantial number of oral histories of both pre-War China and life in England as well as personal photographs and archives. These and other leaflets are available in LMA and on-line at <www.lma.gov.uk>

Conference Reports

The French Atlantic: A 'Tricoloured' Ocean
'Atlantic history,' Alison Games has noted, 'may deal with European dominion, but it should not be Eurocentric. It may cover a space dominated numerically by African migrants, but it need not be Afrocentric. The most dynamic chances of the period of contact may be most immediately evident in the Americas, but it should not be an expanded history of the colonial Americas. It requires a different kind of perspective, one ideally not fixed in any one location'. How such a perspective, one that sees the Atlantic as a multilingual, multicultural place of multiple sites of contact, contestation and contamination, might be developed further was one rationale of this successful symposium held in the Anthony Walker Education Centre at the International Slavery Museum at Liverpool's Albert Dock on the afternoon Monday 21 May in conjunction with the School of Histories, Languages and Cultures at the University of Liverpool. It is necessary to understand the roles and practices of other colonial powers during the trans-Atlantic slave trade to understand fully what was happening in British territories at the time.

The first paper, 'Atlantic Crossings to Quebec' was by Professor Bill Marshall, director of the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies at the University of London. Marshall explored how issues of slavery, labour and migration related to the emergence of the territorial space of Quebec as part of French Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Marshall explored the rise of the French settler population, often as a result of forms of indentured labour, observing that if Eugene Weber had famously noted how if the French Third Republic had transformed 'peasants into Frenchmen', then those artisans who left ports like La Rochelle found themselves engaging in agriculture in Canada – and so in a sense one could see this transformation inverted - 'Frenchmen into peasants'. This small settler population needed close collaboration with the local indigenous population in French Canada than was often the case in comparative

British colonies, (for example the experience of native Americans with respect to the early British colonies in North America). Marshall concluded with a discussion of the experience of 'Les Filles de La Rochelle', the women who left 'Old France' for 'New France', and current representations of life in Quebec during this period, including the novel by Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique*, which centres around an historic act of arson in Old Montreal in a context where oppressions relating to race and slavery suggest it was, in part at least, a subversive act of resistance and rebellion.

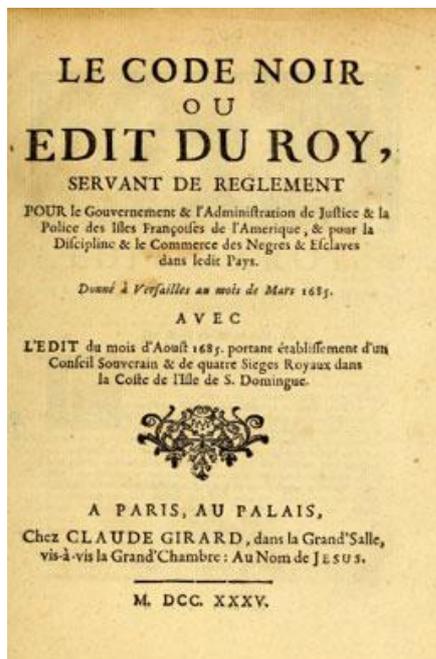


A British view of French attempts to suppress the Haitian revolution. From the Delbarton Digital History Project.

Dr Andy Stafford, a lecturer in French and Francophone Studies at the University of Leeds, continued the theme of resistance and rebellion in his paper on the critical reception of Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh's path-breaking analysis of the 'hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic', *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2001), in France after it was translated in 2008.

Devi Hardeen, a PhD candidate at the University of Liverpool, continued this focus on 'the subaltern' with her thought-provoking paper on two new categories and

concepts emerging out of her doctoral research on South Asian indenture, 'The Brown Atlantic: Questions of Triple Consciousness'. The title of her paper of course evoked Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), a by now very famous book whose shadow in many ways inevitably hung over the whole conference. Yet just as Stafford's discussion of 'the Red Atlantic' complicates any idea of a monochrome Atlantic, so Hardeen's discussion of the 'Brown Atlantic' – which raises the spectre of the possibility of a further category to discuss East Asian indenture ('the Yellow Atlantic', anyone?) – over the long nineteenth century and into the twentieth century – raises a number of very legitimate and important questions.



The Code Noir of Louis XIV laid down, inter alia, rules for the treatment of slaves in the French colonies.

The experience and importance of indentured labour and servitude from South and East Asia is well understood within the particular specialism of Caribbean studies, but this is not yet true within scholarship on Atlantic history as a whole. Regarding 'triple consciousness', a term which I had thought might relate to a particular additional insight into society that might be gained by bringing gender into the discussion of oppression alongside race, for

Hardeen actually referred to cultural West Indian or Antillean identity and forms of self-identification alongside the 'double-consciousness' of race and nation identified by, most famously, the great black American historian W.E.B. Du Bois.

After three very rich and wide-ranging papers, the symposium concluded with a stimulating roundtable discussion which was joined by Professor Charles Forsdick of the University of Liverpool and Dr Richard Benjamin, director of the International Slavery Museum. The implications of thinking about 'Brown Atlantic Indenture' for collective memories of international slavery, and how it might be best commemorated at museums like the I.S.M. given the port of Liverpool's critical role in not only the Atlantic slave trade but also South Asian Atlantic indenture was one theme of the roundtable discussion and another critical rationale of the symposium as a whole, particularly relevant given the continuing variety and prevalence of forms of racialised, forced and 'unfree' labour in the contemporary world.

Christian Høgsbjerg

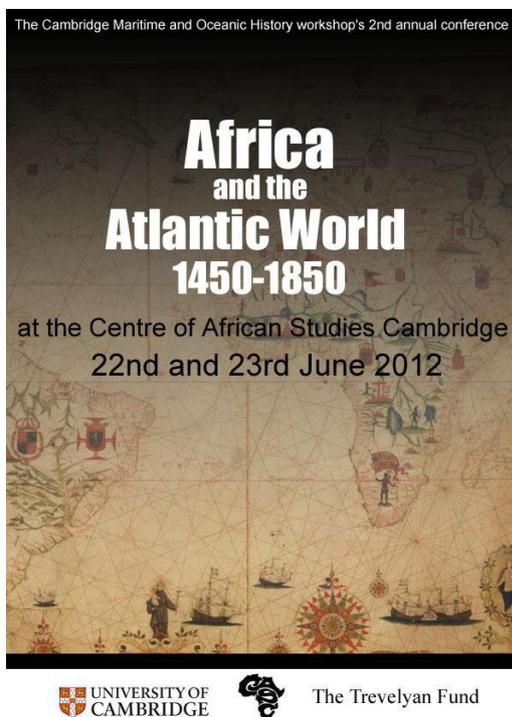
Africa and the Atlantic World took place on 22-23 June 2012 at the Centre of African Studies, University of Cambridge. The role of the Atlantic in transmitting cultures from the Old to the New World and back again has been much examined since Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* and this conference was notable for the range of places the speakers came from and the subjects and locations they covered.

The first session, *Resistance and intrusion in the slave trade*, began with 'Sea power, the state and the British West African settlements, 1748-1792' from Joshua Newton of King's College, University of Cambridge who examined the rivalry between England and France for the slave trade from West Africa and the role of the Royal Navy. Adrian Leonard (Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge) questioned the theory that the slave trade established and then formed the bulk of British marine insurance.

The focus then moved to the Netherlands, with Suze Zijlstra of the University of Amsterdam who looked at 'Accepted illegality: smuggling practices of

Dutch slave traders at the end of the seventeenth century’.

The second session examined *Africa and Portugal*, starting with two papers on Angola. Dr Judith Spicksley (University of York) spoke on ‘Contested enslavement: the Portuguese in Angola and the problem of debt’ in which she looked at the role of Angola as a Portuguese penal colony and debt-slavery in general. Then Dr Kalle Kananaja from Finland’s Åbo Akademi University looked at ‘The shaping of Angolan identity in West Central Africa and Minas Gerais in the eighteenth century’. Jennifer Nelson from the University of Leeds crossed the Atlantic to examine ‘Atlantic histories of the *Africanos livres* in Rio de Janeiro’.



The next session *Imagining Africa* started with ‘The presence and origins of knowledge of Africa in 17th century Sweden’ from Charlotta Forss (Stockholm University). Ryan Hanley from the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, University of Hull, examined how class and culture in mid-18th century Britain affected the treatment of William Ansa Sessarakoo ‘The African Prince’. Finally Mélanie Lamotte, from Robinson College, University of Cambridge, looked at colour prejudice in the French Empire, specifically Guadeloupe 1635-1759.

Africa between seas: links to the Indian Ocean looked at the roles of Madagascar (Edmond Smith, Magdalene College, University of Cambridge) and Cape Town (Dr Gerald Groenewald, University of Johannesburg) in linking the Atlantic to Asia.

In the session *Cultural transmissions of Africa* Maria Clara Sampaio from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil looked at the reactions to attempts by the American government to relocate African-Americans during the era of the Civil War and Taitu Heron from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica, played a lot of the Jamaican Paul Tosh’s rebellion songs.

The Intersection of African and European Atlantics had papers from Professor Michal Tymowski of the Institute of History, University of Warsaw, who examined African perceptions of Europeans in the early period of Portuguese expeditions to West Africa. The early period of the African Atlantic was the subject of the next paper, from Dr Toby Green, King’s College London. (His book on the subject was reviewed in Newsletter #62) This session closed with ‘Liberated slaves in Sierra Leone’ from Dr Mohammed Afkir of Laghout University.

The closing session concentrated on the future of this field. I cannot report on it because I was unable to take in anything further and had gone for a walk. It was an intense, exhilarating and inspiring two days. Many of the delegates said how good it was to realise that other people shared their interests: Black history is a small but growing field in European universities.

As a footnote, it seems that scholarship may be back in fashion. The majority of the papers came from students working on doctoral theses. Their focus was on primary source work and drawing conclusions in the context of its period rather than interpreting documents and other material within an ideological framework .

Kathleen Chater

The **Black Ephemera Conference**, held at the University of Reading on 4 July 2012, examined depictions of people of African descent in ephemera – that is, short-lived printed items such as advertising, theatre programmes, cigarette cards, posters. The event attracted over sixty people including a dozen speakers. They were welcomed by the Director of the University’s Centre for

Ephemera Studies, who apologised for the hurt that some images might cause. There were six men and six women presenters, four of African descent. Three were independent enthusiasts, and the others came from the British Museum, the National Archives, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Bishopsgate Institute and the Museum of London Docklands, the Ephemera Society, Reading University and Copenhagen University.

Patrick Vernon gave a general overview with an emphasis on recent popular culture. He noted that American postcards of lynchings are trading at prices second only to *Titanic* images, and that the U.S.A. had the most offensive ephemera.



George Cruikshank's engravings of London life (this is from *Tom & Jerry*) often include black people.

Temi Odumosu showed print images from Georgian and Regency England (mainly London), arguing that these were influenced by colonial life in the West Indies and spoke about how Gillray and the Cruikshank included political satire. Tom Wareham talked of how ephemera has been used in the London, Sugar and Slavery Gallery at the Museum of London Docklands, and the use of language by the anti-slavery and pro-slavery groups with the former very much aware of the power of ephemera. He showed the slave ship *Brookes* (and its appearance on the 1979 LP cover of Bob Marley's *Survival*). Wareham also showed paintings and noted these 'respectful images' manifested respect and dignity.

Prints from the pro- and anti-slavery movements were exhibited by Jonathan King's introduction to ephemera representing Africa and the Caribbean at the British Museum. This includes Hans

Sloane's collection acquired in Jamaica and an Akan drum obtained in Virginia in the 18th century.

Ephemera Society stalwart Amoret Tanner talked about a *carte-de-visite* of Mary Seacole and supplied an outline biography. Maull & Co's *carte-de-visite* was not dated but showed Seacole with three medals (Turkish, French and British).

Leon Robinson's presentation was lively for he encouraged the audience to hold and examine items of Victorian ephemera and told how by treating documents in this way he gained the attention and minds of young people. Members of the audience enjoyed this knowledgeable and enthusiastic approach, for the documents were of a history that relates to modern times.

In my contribution, I concentrated on postcards produced between 1904 and 1910 showing three groups – the Jamaican Native Choir, Balmer's Kaffir Boys, and the Congo Pygmies – having warned that picture postcards, although invented at the end of the 19th century, can use photographs taken decades earlier. The Jamaican choir included a Liverpool-born young man; the Kaffir or Singing Boys of J. H. Balmer left many postcards but where they performed is almost unknown. The cards support a stereotype: a pagan continent and men not wearing trousers. The Pygmies appear in many postcards as a stereotype of unknown Africa, but private photographs taken when they lived in a Yorkshire village revealed a different view.

Mary Guyatt discussed the Black presence in children's ephemera, with dehumanised Black figures, mission collecting boxes in nurseries using images of Africans as childish, and catalogues from stores selling toys and games.

Standing in for Sara Griffiths, Sandra Shakespeare talked us through photographic images at the National Archives's CO 1069 files which are being put on line. Deposited for copyright registration purposes since the 1860s and largely un-catalogued, her examples included images taken in Africa, the West Indies, Australia, and New Guinea as well as advertisement art work. Deborah Sutherland discussed post-1948 South Africa's black pamphlets, press photographs, tee-shirts and badges, the unofficial story of the apartheid years.

Stefan Dickers was another lively speaker, describing the papers of Bernie Grant, M.P. and a London union official, now held at the Bishopsgate Institute. The items are described on <www.berniegrantarchive.org.uk>.

Zoe Whiteley, an American based in London, showed Hank Thomas's work with American media images of African Americans in advertisements. Some required specific knowledge of ad campaigns and products.

Overall it was a useful day, taking people away from their collections and getting to meet others. Only one image appeared in two presentations. The conference was well managed. Some of the 'academic' language reduced understanding but showed the value of a thesaurus (does anyone else cringe at 'scholastic discourse?'), and there were a couple of speakers who talked so fast that much of their message was lost. As always, the application of today's concepts on old images revealed an absence understanding of the beliefs of a particular era. The Ephemera Society and the University of Reading are to be congratulated.

Jeffrey Green

The Legacies of British Slave-ownership Conference was held 29 -31 March 2012 at University College London.

Robin Blackburn opened the Colloquium with the Neale Lecture in the evening of the 29 March. On Friday 30 March, the conference began. Catherine Hall, the project leader of Legacies of British Slave Ownership (LBS), opened the day talking about the period from 1830s -1870s and the birth of modern Britain. She sees the Empire as critical to that formation - remaking of the ruling class and other classes. She considers that absentee owners are the key to the imperial British state, the interaction between slave owners and the state was crucial to the end of slavery. The Legacy of British Slavery project sees them as still key between 1830 -1870. The aim has been to create an integrated framework of economic, social, and cultural history by doing empirical work on thousands of slave owners.

Nick Draper spoke next, asking what conclusions will we be able to reach with

this new data? He said he is 'working in the shadow of Eric Williams', extending this analysis into the C19th and commercial continuities are to be seen in our modern economy. There are hundreds of case studies of slave owners, but less focus on compensation moneys. He added that Marxist historians experience some disquiet about slavery. Slavery is only one element in wealth creation over the centuries. LBS is trying to identify its importance.



Keith McClelland spoke next about political engagements. He observed that between the 1830s -1860s links between politics and slave owners changed with rear guard actions by slave owners and that the term 'West Indian interest' is too narrow. The beneficiaries/connections with compensation are very wide. They were not unified blood/ideology/politics/social locations.

Catherine Hall returned to speak about the remaking of racial hierarchies and the memories and histories of slavery from those who got compensation. She gave four examples of writers whose family got compensation. Slavery shaped the memory

of them all and made them preoccupied with questions of race and history.

The second session of the day, **The Imperial State**, was opened by Zoe Laidlaw of Royal Holloway, University of London. She looked at post-emancipation slavery, indigenous dispossession and labour. In 1837 the Aboriginal Protection Society looked at the non-European work force. The C19th empire had lots of migrated labour. Although there was abolition of slavery, there was oppression of indigenous peoples. She thought that these two histories need to be looked at together, the contrast of 'white' and 'black' colonies is too simple and suggested reading *The Problem of Freedom* by Holt.

Richard Huzzey from the University of Plymouth spoke next about the conflicting claims of liberty and emancipation. Britain became an anti-slavery society, a global enemy of Slavery, but emancipation fell well short of providing real freedom. New forms of unfree labour were created and there was an uneven absorption of anti-slavery values. He looked at four elements: the role of the anti-slavery state; the relationship between free trade and free/slave labour; naval suppression of the slave trade and Indian indentured labour.

The third session, **Formations of capital: beyond 'merchants and planters'** was opened by Pat Hudson of Cardiff University. Ms Hudson spoke about aspects of British trade, in for example, Indian cotton, and how 1833 wasn't the end of profits for those involved in slave ownership and unfree labour. Capital was put into textiles, ship building, quarrying, canals, railways, banking and insurance and just ostentatious spending.

Chris Evans spoke next about Slavery and Welsh industry. Wales is a poor region, but there was a lot of early industrialisation, from 1690s copper, 1760s mining, 1840s coalfields in South Wales. However, only 69 of the 5782 claims for compensation came from Welsh people, compared to 582 Scottish and 121 Irish. Mr Evans thought this might be because rich people enjoy the company of other rich people so the Welsh rich moved elsewhere. He noted that people who became rich from other sources of wealth, e.g. the East India Company, went to Wales.

Julian Hoppit of UCL responded and instigated a discussion. In the evening there were readings by Andrea Levy, author of *Small Island* and *The Long Song*, followed by a discussion.

Day 2, Saturday 31 March, kicked off with a session on **From Slavery to Indenture**. Heather Cateau said that following emancipation, especially in Trinidad and Guyana, Indian immigrants initially had the highest wages. By the 1880s and 1890s there was a 60% reduction in wages, as low as 6d per day. She concluded it is not sufficient to compare the two extremes. Black 'free' labour may have been freer for the workers pre -emancipation. As free labour evolved it was increasingly devalued. 'Hiring' became the new negro business, 'Indenture' was the new slavery.

Anita Rupprecht from the University of Brighton discussed the implementation of change in the West Indies post-emancipation. Clare Anderson responded with reflections on how there is a continuum of status/work categories in the transition between slavery and freedom. There was a transition from private to public management of labour. Indentured labour evolved and was paid for by the government. Indenture, introduced in 1845, became brutal.

After lunch, the second session of the day was **Public Histories, Family Histories**. The first speaker was Alison Light, whose book *Common People* is a family history of the labouring poor in England, not about slavery. Professional historians have been scathing about family historians. Because they work differently from professional historians, with their longitudinal reach they create multiple narrative with 'split screen' accounts of the past. This can be unsettling to historians with a narrow academic focus.

Andrea Stuart wrote *Sugar in the Blood*, a family story from Barbados [reviewed on p. 35] and spoke about her ancestry. On the maternal side of her family George Ashby, her 8xgreat-grandfather, had 9 acres in the parish of St Phillip in the 1630s. Hers is one of only a very few Barbadian families with wills going back to the C17th. An ancestor left part of his plantation to his slave children. Their lighter skin gave them privilege in a mixed race caste society, an advantage in the emancipation era. The

family got £400,000 compensation in today's money.

Mary Chamberlain responded, saying that Alison Light and Andrea Stuart have very different backgrounds. She then posed a number of questions for discussion. As family histories are microcosms of conventional history and vice-versa, to what extent can a family history represent and illuminate history? How does it work on us? Is it just self-indulgence? Slavery is a potent and poisonous legacy in the matter of race so is family history the best medium to reach understanding? We also need to ask whose narrative it is. When we build family histories we are creating a personal narrative and may be romancing the past. We can position ourselves to look 'big' in a history that makes us look 'small'. Also, what is a family? Who has the right to claim or refuse family membership?

The last session of the day **Reparations, restitution and the historian** should have begun with Sir Hilary Beckles from the University of the West Indies, but he was ill, so Verene A. Shepherd spoke in his place, looking at the debate around reparations and the arguments for and against it and on the commissions and organisations in Jamaica, St Lucia, Tobago and Trinidad.

Vijaya Teelock, a Commissioner and Vice Chair on the Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) in Mauritius, spoke next, noting that understandings of words like 'justice' vary across the world. He looked at development of ideas and proposals within the TJC, which has now concluded that redressing gross injustices should not be just in terms of money and land. Women are asking for schools and public services more than land reform. The TJC now recommends monuments at each farm to record names; free meals to young people at schools; land cases to be heard in the supreme court; the creation of a land bank to provide land for descendants of those who have never owned land.

Françoise Vergès of Goldsmiths College, University of London responded. She said that it's ignorance and vested interests which lead to denial. Dienke Hondius from the Free University of Amsterdam spoke about the Dutch heritage. 2013 will be 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery Dutch colonies. She noted that here's nothing in the school syllabi about slavery,

Surinam and other Dutch colonies. Ms Vergès also noted that slavery doesn't figure in French history. A discussion followed about the issues around reparations and memory.

I have a number of friends who were not able to attend this conference so I wrote some notes on it. The conference was a very rich one, full of great contributions from both speakers and delegates. My notes are very abbreviated and I take full responsibility for all errors and my apologies to anyone I misreport in it.

Lucy MacKeith

[I edited down Lucy's admirably full notes, so I too apologise for any misreporting. Editor]

Sean Creighton has written a very full report on the conference which is thought-provoking and can be seen on historyandsocialaction.blogspot.com/.../further-thoughts-on-legacies-of-british-slavery

🔗 Quick click 🔗

Martin Spafford recommends

<www.sierraleoneheritage.org/CI/>

This is a wonderful site containing thousands of artefacts of Sierra Leone history combining collections from Sierra Leone National Museum, British Museum, British Library, museums from Glasgow, Brighton, Liverpool. Also sound recordings, videos, national monuments, links etc etc etc. Easy to search by item, region or collection. An absolute joy to explore. I heard about this from the BM staff.

Magazine Round-up

The *Historical Journal* (55), No. 2, June 2012 has an article by Trevor Burnard and Richard Follett 'Caribbean slavery, British anti-slavery and the cultural politics of venereal disease', which looks at how changing models of scientific explanation had significant cultural implications for abolitionists, slaveholders and enslaved people. As abolitionists in Britain focused on the sexual excesses and moral failings of Caribbean slaveholders to depict them as debauched and fundamentally 'unBritish', what had been regarded as a commonplace affliction became stigmatized.

African and Black Diaspora (4) No. 1, January 2011 carries Maggi M. Moorhouse's 'Military Service, governance and the African Diaspora', which looks at the racialised constraints on Black soldiers in the United States Army and in the Caribbean colonial forces of the British military. There is also a review essay by Daniel McNeil 'Liverpool: the capital of a Black Atlantic?', based on *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sale: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* by Jacqueline Nassy Brown of Princeton University. This work was highly praised in America but Mr McNeil (of the University of Newcastle) finds omissions and misconceptions. The whole essay provides a useful overview of the issues and publications on this important community.

The BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are* (June 2012) has the Rev. Joseph Jackson Fuller in the *My Hero* column, written by his descendant Gladys Ives-Keeler. The Rev. Joseph Jackson Fuller (1825–1908) was born in Jamaica, the son of a slave. He was eight years old at the abolition of slavery. Educated by Baptist missionaries, he became a missionary himself, serving in the Cameroons, where he headed mission stations. He taught, preached and translated the *Pilgrim's Progress* into the local language, Duala. He retired to England with his second wife and lived first in Barnes in Surrey, then in Stoke Newington in London. He continued to preach, on one memorable occasion in Birmingham in 1889 to an audience of four thousand. He is buried in Abney Park Cemetery. Ms Ives-

Keeler is descended from his first marriage to a Jamaican schoolteacher. She contacted Jeffrey Green through his website and he was able to put her in touch with the descendants of the Rev. Fuller's second marriage.

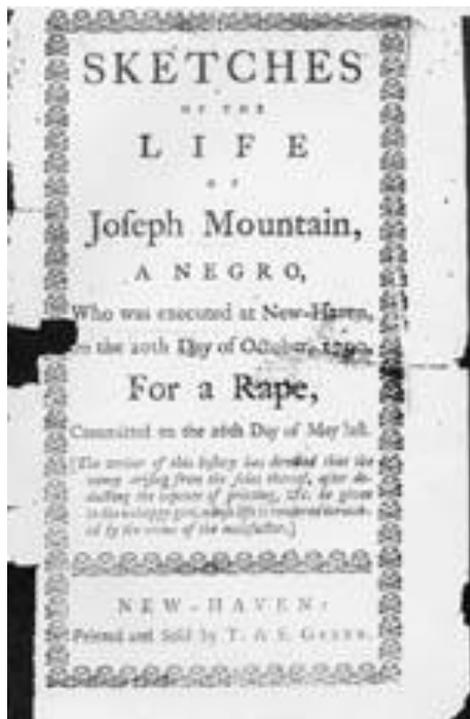
Nigel Pocock's *Vision Training & Research News* (no. 25, April 2012) notes the slavery walk organised for Youth With A Mission from Clapham to Westminster, in which 50 participated; and the death of Elizabeth Briggs a manumitted Antiguan who died in Bristol in 1835. She was probably the daughter of 'white magistrate and slave holder Robert Briggs and his slave Betsey Leah. Attempts are being made to locate her grave.

The Refugee Review journal is a new, electronic publication, developed, managed, edited, and peer-reviewed entirely by new scholars, on a voluntary basis. The volunteers are selected from among the New Scholars Network (NSN) membership (of the Refugee Research Network) and approved by the NSN Executive Committee. The journal's aim is to collect and promote diverse contributions, from standard academic articles, research papers and book reviews to photo- and video-documentary, interviews, narratives, and fiction. New Scholars Network: <http://newscholarsnetwork.wordpress.com> Refugee Research Network: www.refugeereseach.net

History Today (October 2012) contains an article by Onyeaka about Tudor Africans entitled **What's in a Name?** He explores the range of words used to describe people of African origin – Blacks, Moors, Blackamoors, Negroes, Negars, Ethiopians – and concludes that the terms were interchangeable in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He does not seem to have read the article in the *BASA Newsletter* # 59, which looked at the different words used by early slave traders to describe different classes of Africans. It may be that their jargon was not used by land-based officials, but the argument should have been considered.

Historic Document: Sketches of the Life of Joseph Mountain

Sketches of the Life of Joseph Mountain,
A Negro,
Who was executed at New-Haven, on the
20th Day of October, 1790.
For a Rape,
Committed on the 26th Day of May last.



This autobiography of a mulatto slave from Philadelphia was dictated while Joseph Mountain was under sentence of death for raping a white girl. He was born in 1758 and was a house servant for the Mifflin family. Samuel Mifflin was a lawyer and a prominent citizen, even being elected to the post of Mayor of Philadelphia (although he refused to serve). Joseph Mountain considered himself superior to other African-Americans of this time because of the family he served.

When he was seventeen he came, with his master's permission, to England.

One day, at an ale-house in London, I accidentally became acquainted with one Francis Hyde, originally from Middlesex and one

Thomas Wilson, of Staffordshire in England. They were travelling the country, with a hand organ and various other musical instruments, pretending to great art in numerous performances, and really possessing surprizing knowledge in every species of juggling. This was their employment in the day time, for the purpose of executing more effectually the principal business of their lives, viz.*¹ highway robbery. They soon found me susceptible of almost any impressions, and neither incapable of, nor averse to, becoming a companion in their iniquity. We all sat out from London about 8 o'clock in the evening after I had joined them, each armed with a hanger and a brace of pistols. We had also suitable dresses and a dark lanthorn. Our landlord, who kept tavern at the sign of the black horse, at Charing-cross, furnished us with every requisite for the expedition. His name was William Humphrys. The plan this evening was to attack the mail-coach, which would start at 12 o'clock at night, from the ship tavern, between Woolwich and Gravesend, about 9 miles from London.

And thus he embarked on a life of crime around the country. After a lucrative period

I now resolved to quit this course of life which I had hitherto pursued with so much success.

Accordingly I entered on board the brig Sally, as Cook, and made two voyages in her to Lisbon. Upon my return, after exhausting my pay, I made another voyage, in the Fanny, Capt. Sinclair, to Kingston, in Jamaica; which being finished in nine months, I again visited London, and concluded to relinquish the seafaring business for the present. At the old place of

resort I became acquainted with one Haynes and Jones, both of Yorkshire. They were partially initiated in the science of *foot-pads*. They soon proposed that I should resume my profession, and join them. My former mode of life, tho' singularly vicious, yet possessed many charms in my view.

Mountain resumed his, very successful, criminal career mainly in the North, where he continued to evade arrest. He took part in the Gordon Riots of 1780 in London.

In the beginning of June 1780, I joined the mob headed by Lord George Gordon. This mob was the result of a dispute between the Papists and Protestants. It was a matter of the most sovereign indifference to me, whether the rebellion was just or unjust. I eagerly joined the sport, rejoicing that an opportunity presented whereby I might obtain considerable plunder in the general confusion....The five succeeding days were employed in demolishing the houses of Sir George Saville, in burning Newgate, and relieving about 300 persons confined in it, (some under sentence of death) in setting fire to King's bench and Fleet-prisons, and in innumerable other acts of violence and outrage towards those who were in the opposition. The bank was twice assailed, but was too well guarded for our attempts. On the 7th day we were overpowered by superior force, and obliged to disperse. During this confusion I provided for myself, by plundering at various times, about 500l. sterling.

After leading a life of such dissipation for five or six years, an incident occurred which caused me, for some time, to abandon my former pursuit, and settle down in tolerable regularity. I became acquainted with a Miss Nancy Allingame, a white girl of about 18 years of age. She was possessed

of about 500l. [five hundred pounds] in personal property, and a house at Islington. It may appear singular to many, that a woman of this description should be in the least interested in my favor; yet such was the fact, that she not only endured my society, but actually married me in about six months after our first acquaintance. Her father and friends remonstrated against this connexion; but she quitted them all, and united herself to me. My whole residence with her was about three years; during which time I exhausted all the property which came into my possession by the marriage. We then separated, and she was received by her father.

Joseph Mountain went back to his old life of crime and then in 1789 returned to America, where he committed a rape and was sentenced to death. He was executed on 20 October 1790.

See eng.lr.edu/sites/eng.lr.edu/files/docs/Bowles.doc for an edited version, with an interesting introduction about how the autobiography was written and the significance it would have had in America at that time.

BASA on Jiscmail

The National Academic Mailing List Service, known as JISCmail, is a way for people primarily (but not exclusively) in the academic field to communicate, to share information, to ask questions or to seek help with a research topic and to comment on current events. There are a number of areas, and BASA is one of them. To subscribe to this on-line community, go to

<<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/BASA>>

You will be asked to enter your e-mail address and a password.



General History

Hassan Mahamdallie, *Black British Rebels: Figures from Working Class History* (Bookmarks, London, 2012) ISBN 978 1 9051 9297 7, £3.00. This recent pamphlet, *Black British Rebels*, coming as it does in the aftermath of the riots that rocked England in the summer of 2011, attempts to build on the method pioneered by figures like C.L.R. James to discuss what he eloquently calls the 'unique and rich phenomenon – the black radicals that led British workers into the struggle for freedom, justice and a better world'.

Taking 'Black' in its broader political meaning to include South Asian activists alongside those whose ethnicities are Black African or Black Caribbean, the pamphlet consists of biographical portraits of six of the perhaps most well known but doubtless critical figures in the tradition of 'black British radicalism', the African abolitionist Olaudah Equiano; the mixed-heritage Jamaican agitator Robert Wedderburn; the Black London Chartist leader William Cuffay; the Indian Communist Shapurji Saklatvala, who was elected MP for North Battersea in 1924 and was imprisoned during the British General Strike; the Trinidadian Communist and founder of the Notting Hill Carnival Claudia Jones, and Grunwick strike leader Jayaben Desai, who hailed from northern India but led a critical and inspirational class struggle in north London during the 1970s.

'All of them combined the fight to end racism with the wider fights of the working class movement', Mr Mahamdallie notes. 'All of them understood that the two arenas were not different forks in the road, they were the same road that had to be travelled by all. Quite simply, while one soul is in bondage, none of us can be free'.

Mr Mahamdallie clearly illuminates some of the potentialities and possibilities for black and white unity in modern British history, though there are a number of weaknesses. The research undertaken for this seems distinctly dated in places, and overall the pamphlet is overly reliant on older accounts presented in general histories of the Black experience in Britain by the likes of Ron Ramdin.

Much of the content originated from a series of clearly and powerfully-written articles dating from the 1990s while the author was a journalist on *Socialist Worker*, and I can still remember reading one such article on Wedderburn years ago with a sense of wonder at both the revelatory content and the clarity and passion of the writing. There is little evidence of engagement with recent findings and important work relating to these six inspiring figures that has appeared over the last decade or so. Marcus Rediker's 2007 work *The Slave Ship* is not cited despite the fact it contains a fine discussion of Equiano's experiences. There are also minor, factual errors. For example, the Haitian Revolution lasted from 1791-1804, not 1791-1794 as claimed on page 4.

Nonetheless, this work could not be more timely, given David Cameron's attacks on 'multiculturalism' (and for that matter Ed Miliband's recent attack on migrant workers). Overall *Black British Rebels* fulfils its aim and purpose as an introductory pamphlet admirably. The pamphlet's value as an educational resource also owes much to the fact that it is attractively designed, with each biographical sketch illustrated. It includes a guide for further reading.

Christian Høgsbjerg

Minkah Makalani – *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2011), ISBN 978-0-8078-3504-3, \$39.95. This work is a very useful, if perhaps overly ambitious, introduction to what the author (an assistant professor of African and African and African diaspora studies at the University of Texas at Austin) calls 'the history of interwar radical black internationalism'. It is a story that 'travels

from the heights of 1920s Harlem radicalism to the summit of anticolonial activism and Black international organising in 1930s London, encompassing the ideas, activities, organisations, and networks of the black radicals who made this history'.

Taking inspiration from the work of Brent Hayes Edwards, author of *The Practice of Diaspora*, who has been at the forefront of the recent turn in Black Studies towards a concern with 'black internationalism', Mr Makalani has assiduously worked his way through much of the secondary literature. He has also undertaken a quite staggering amount of archival research internationally over many years, and the result is generally impressive, given Mr Makalani's literary flair and eye for the telling quotation or story.

The main original focus research was the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), an organisation of up to 8,000 members at its height, that coalesced in 1919, in particular in Harlem around a number of impressive Caribbean intellectuals who were inspired by the blows the Russian Revolution had struck against racism and imperialism and were critical of the failings of the Socialist Party of America to take race and Black self-organisation seriously. Mr Makalani begins with the ABB. His aim is to illuminate the organisational history in a lively and accessible manner by focusing attention on the political and intellectual evolution of critical Black radical activists. I found this account of the rise and fall of the ABB to be most informative and enlightening.

Mr Makalani then moves on to the failures and limitations of American Communists with respect to work around race in the 1920s, highlighting the sectarianism that stopped the American Negro Labour Congress fulfilling anything like its potential, and the decision of the Communist International to form the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers in 1930. He then turns to international Communism's most famous Black leader, the Trinidadian George Padmore. He looks at Padmore's break with orthodox Communism in 1933 and the role he subsequently played in London during the 1930s alongside the likes of Amy Ashwood Garvey, C.L.R. James and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson in forming militant Pan-Africanist organisations like the

International African Friends of Ethiopia and the International African Service Bureau (IASB).

Mr Makalani concludes by noting that when James met Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1939 to discuss the strategy and tactics for Black liberation in the United States, he rightly suggested that establishing an American branch of the IASB could be a model way for Black revolutionaries to organise alongside other campaigners against institutional racism in the US and against colonial oppression internationally.

The strengths of Mr Makalani's work lie in his ability to explore the difficulties faced by those fighting for international Black self-organisation. Difficulties were not only due to the short-sighted vision and sectarianism of what Makalani calls 'the white Left' but also to rivalries around leadership between Caribbean migrants and 'native' Black American activists. These were not really overcome effectively until the formation of the IASB in 1937.

The work contains generally accurate and insightful biographical portraits of a whole host of Black radicals, many of whose achievements deserve far greater recognition, bringing to life distinctly neglected figures in radical history such as Hubert Harrison, Cyril V. Briggs and Lovett Fort-Whiteman. Though his focus is on 'radical black internationalism', Makalani does not overlook the important contribution made by, for example, Indian and Chinese nationalists. His account of the changing visual imagery used by anti-racist and anti-colonial activists is also thought-provoking.

However, I felt the work was somewhat limited by a failure effectively to contextualise this narrative adequately with respect to the story of what Mr Makalani calls 'organised Marxism', in particular to the internal degeneration of the Russian Revolution during the 1920s followed by the Stalinist counter-revolution of the 1930s – and the consequences of this for international Communism. He does not make sense of the real differences over strategy and tactics that did exist between Padmore (who still held to many orthodox Communist perspectives after his break with the Communist International) and the Trotskyist James.

More generally speaking, his categories of 'organised Marxism' and 'white Left' miss out something of the complexity of the relationship of early classical Marxist thought with respect to race, class and colonialism.

Overall, however, Mr Makalani has written an important work that brings to light a wealth of information from scattered archives and usefully complements the growing literature on militant anti-colonialism in the inter-war period and will give readers much to ponder for the struggles against the powerful hierarchies of race, class and gender today.

Christian Høgsbjerg

Kwame Nimako & Glenn Willemsen, *The Dutch Atlantic: Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation* (Pluto Press, 2011) ISBN 978-0-7453-3107-2, pbk £ . All historians come to believe that their particular subject is the fulcrum on which world history has been pivoted, and these two are no exception. They endearingly locate the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Dutch religious conflict with the Spanish Habsburg empire, as the decisive factor which 'went hand in hand with the institutionalization of the Atlantic "slave" trade and slavery'. However, religion, even its role in the abolitionist movement, is then put on a back-burner.

There's a lot of useful statistical information here and comparisons with Britain. Early on, the Dutch pragmatically decided not to compete in the West Indies but to focus on their presence in East Asia and there are some interesting comparisons with the sources of Dutch wealth from their trade and possessions there. I would have liked more on the Dutch possessions in the West Indies, how they were governed, what their trade was. Alas, most of the archives of the Dutch West India Company were sold for scrap in the nineteenth century, although the authors do not mention this.

Africans are referred to throughout as 'captives' or 'abducted peoples'. The idea that, without the Europeans, Africa would have been some kind of conflict-free pre-lapsarian paradise is not tenable. Everywhere else around the globe men were – and still are – waging wars for power, territory and glory (not necessarily in that order) and the idea that, without the

European slave trade Africa would have been different is implausible. This does suggest that the work draws on early research. There is, for example, a passing remark that the Dutch, although a Protestant state like Britain, were still regarding slavery as part of God's law in the 1830s but no further exploration of this. More recent work (at least in Britain and the USA) does examine the role of public opinion, which at that time was overwhelmingly religious opinion.

I found this a disappointing work. Perhaps I wanted something different but ultimately it is the way that it is written that I found off-putting. The authors' tone is didactic with complete confidence that there can be no dispute with their conclusions. Too often, however, the phrase 'We argue' introduces an assertion. It seems that the work was not written to persuade but for people who are already in agreement. Glenn Willemsen died in 2008 and this book is a tribute to his academic work and as the first director of NiNsee, the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy. In his introduction, Stephen Small says this is the result of many debates within NiNsee – and the end result is a rather cosy, parochial, academic exercise. In fairness it is impossible to summarise in 190 pages such a complex subject and this work seems to be a whistle-stop tour of much longer book, which must be the next step.



Military

Ronald M. Lamothe *Slaves of Fortune: Sudanese soldiers and the River War 1896-1898* (James Currey, 2011) ISBN 9781847010421 £45 hbk This book was sent to BASA. It is not directly relevant to Black British history, although there might be some who would argue that the history of the British Empire is pertinent because Black people in Britain are the result of it.



Biography

Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (University of Georgia Press, 2011), ISBN 978-0-8203-3338-0, £25.95 hbk.

Phillis Wheatley (c. 1753-1784) was the first person of African origin in America to publish a book. Her poems, written when she was a teenager in Boston, Massachusetts, were published in England, which she visited in 1773. This is the first full-length biography of this significant figure. Historians tend to rank Black people according to their perceived importance in political or social movements, which may be why there is so much on Equiano and so little on everyone else, especially women.

Professor Carretta has produced a richly detailed account of Wheatley's life in the contexts of often-neglected religious and literary activities of the period, as well as the political movements. Because he is a professor of English, he brings an important extra dimension to his works on Black people (he has also written illuminatingly about Olaudah Equiano and Philip Quaque) which showing the inner lives rather than just depicting them as political symbols of enslavement.

The Wheatleys, who effectively adopted Phillis after her arrival from the Senegambia, were evangelical Christians who saw it as their duty to pass on their faith to their slaves. Professor Carretta recreates the lives of the masters of Black slaves/servants at that time and in that place. This pays dividends in terms of understanding the day-to-day lives of those who served them and also showing them as part of the society, not isolated from it.

Phillis Wheatley could have stayed in England. Professor Carretta's exploration of why she did not and her life after she was emancipated on her return to Boston raises

interesting questions about how far black people, especially women, could control their destiny at that time. There also is an interesting analysis of the influence Wheatley's work had after her death and how it was perceived and used by abolitionists and those opposed to it.

Kathleen Chater

Andrea Stuart, *Sugar in the Blood: A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire*, (Portobello Books, 2012) ISBN 978-1-846-27071-0, £18.99, hbk. In the 1640s, George Ashby left England, to settle in Barbados. He and his descendants flourished on the profits from sugar. Andrea Stuart, one of those descendants, tells the family's story, setting it against the history of slavery in the Caribbean. Relationships between masters and slaves produced a mixed (or 'coloured' as they were known) class, who often recognised by their fathers and were taught skills. Their privileged position made them a buffer between resentful unskilled labourers and the white establishment. Ms Stuart is of that class and is particularly aware of the sometimes fragile sense of status and the insecurities this produced. She explores the differences between being Black in the United States and in the West Indies and the consequences for migrants and the legacy of colonialism. Barbados is one of the few former colonies that has flourished post-independence, while Jamaican society has been riven by political factionalism and violence.

For those who want to assume that all Black people, wherever they come from, have the same backgrounds, experiences, needs and interests this is a thought-provoking work. Ms Stuart, to her credit, does not claim to be able to answer definitively the questions she raises but from her own family history is able to raise a number of issues.

Kathleen Chater

Roger Oldfield, *Outrage: The Edalji Five and the Shadow of Sherlock Holmes* (Vanguard Press, 2010) £11.99 or €12.99 pbk. As well as writing detective stories, Arthur Conan Doyle was involved in real-life crimes, trying to redress injustices. His most controversial case was that of George Edalji, a Birmingham solicitor, convicted in 1903 of brutally

maiming horses in a Staffordshire village. The dispute continues because opinions are often polarised – some still think Edalji ‘guilty as hell’, even though he was cleared on appeal, and this case led to the creation of the Court of Criminal Appeal in 1907.

In 2005 the events were retold as fiction in Julian Barnes’ novel *Arthur & George*, and the next year saw *Conan Doyle and the Parson’s Son*, a substantial investigation by Gordon Weaver. Roger Oldfield became interested in the case when he taught history at Great Wyrley High School; he has pursued it with the zeal and rigour of a historian, and his book seems unlikely to be surpassed as a comprehensive, intelligent, balanced and intensely readable account.

George’s father, Shapurji Edalji, the Vicar of Great Wyrley in Staffordshire, was born a Parsee in Bombay, and his mother, born Charlotte Stoneham, came of an English family. Any difficulties that arose through Shapurji Edalji’s long incumbency in the parish were not great; they seem to have had more to do with his single-minded insistence on moral duty over compromise than with racial differences. Racial prejudice certainly played its part in his son George’s case, however. The court that cleared him of the animal mutilations refused compensation on the grounds that he was guilty of writing a series of vile anonymous letters – an offence of which he had never been accused, never tried and certainly never convicted. Many years later a labourer confessed to writing them.

The amateur investigators working for Conan Doyle were sometimes inept, but they were matched in that respect by the police, who often seemed to have just one object in view: to arrest and convict George Edalji.

Roger Johnson
Editor, The Sherlock Holmes Journal

Stephen Bourne and Esther Bruce *Esther Bruce: A Black London Seamstress Her Story 1912-1994* (History & Social Action Publications, 2012) ISBN 978-0-9548943-7-5, pbk £4.00. Stephen Bourne has now updated his previously published account of his honorary aunt Esther Bruce, the daughter of a Black seaman from Demerara, and his wife Edith Brooks from Hoxton. Her mother died in 1918 and her father in 1941 and Esther moved in with Stephen’s

grandmother, becoming a member of the family. Since Esther’s death in 1992, Mr Bourne has been looking for her half-brother, William, born illegitimately before Edith met Joseph Bruce. On Edith’s death, Billy went to live with an uncle on his mother’s side of the family. In an appendix, the search, and its results, are revealed.

Kathleen Chater

Jeffrey Green, *Coleridge-Taylor: A Centenary Celebration* (History and Social Action Publications in association with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Network, 2012), ISBN 978-0-9548943-8-2, pbk, £4.00. This is a timely publication in the centenary year of the composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s death. Jeffrey Green has done sterling work in uncovering the stories of numerous Black musicians in Britain and there has been much confusion and misinformation about Coleridge-Taylor’s background, particularly on his father Daniel Taylor, who came from a prosperous family in Sierra Leone. This is a very useful introduction to the musician’s life and works, revealing just how much he composed in his brief life – he died at 37 of pneumonia – and how popular his work was in its day. Although *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* is the only composition that is still regularly performed, Coleridge-Taylor wrote much, much more and is probably due for a re-assessment. Hopefully the centenary celebrations, and this booklet, will provide some impetus.

Kathleen Chater

 Quick click 

The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust has launched a new online magazine entitled **SLIK** (Stephen Lawrence Instills Knowledge). It features news, case studies, events, opinions, interviews and more! The focus will always be on issues that are important to the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust – Youth, Education, Enterprise, Equality, Community, Architecture. Go to www.stephenlawrence.org.uk/stephen-lawrence-online-magazine-out-now/

For more information about the magazine contact Doreen Thompson-Addo on 020-8100 2816.

Historic Figure: Chang the Chinese Giant

For over three years the British were amused by and wondered at 'Chang the Chinese giant'. Born in the 1840s in Fuzhou, Zhan Shichai arrived in London from Shanghai in September 1865, accompanied by his wife, two other Chinese and a dwarf. He went on display, described as 'something great, stupendous, wonderful, and not inviting' having an 'impassable stupid countenance'. He was 7ft 8in tall, and. His stage name was Chang Woo Gow, and with his wife and suite he was at Marlborough House to meet Queen Victoria's son and heir.



In October he appeared at Crystal Palace but Londoners had to go to the Egyptian Hall in central London to see them – except when his carriage broke (the floor gave way under his weight) 'precipitating the whole celestial party into the mud' near Westminster Abbey in late October 1865. They remained at the Egyptian Hall into late February 1866, appeared at the Crystal Palace in March then at St George's Hall in Liverpool where an advertisement on the front page of the *Liverpool Mercury* (21 March 1866) said he was aged 19, his small-footed wife was 18 and the dwarf was 30in tall. There were four shows daily.

Chang was back at the Crystal Palace in late May, then has been traced in Dublin (November 1866) and Paris in the summer of 1867. He visited a London brewery in July 1868, Sheffield in February 1869 and Manchester, but in June new employment

was sought through an advertisement in the *Era*. He was not attracting much interest having been in Britain for at least three years, so went to the USA in September 1869. He was in California in July 1870. After the death of his first wife, he married Liverpool-born Catherine Santley in Australia in 1871, and they had two sons, Edwin and Ernest. The family moved to the Isle of Wight, and then to 6 Southcote Road in Bournemouth where they established a tea room and shop with the name 'Moyen', a Chinese province. This became a popular place for visitors to Bournemouth who 'always found him friendly and affable'.

He died in Bournemouth on 5 November 1893 a few months after his wife. Their sons were then aged 12 and 14. The national and local press reported his death, with the *Hampshire Advertiser* stating he had been retired for some time and had been importing Chinese goods. He was 'well-proportioned ... and bore himself with the greatest courtesy and dignity'. He was buried in the town's nonconformist cemetery. Edwin and Ernest Gow remained in Bournemouth and were listed in the 1901 census at Landsdowne Road, living with photographer William Day and his family.

Jeffrey Green

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