



Medway African and  
Caribbean Association



**THE HISTORIC  
DOCKYARD**  
CHATHAM



## **Temporary Exhibition Design Brief**

for

## **Untold Stories: A Celebration of Black People in Kent**

## **Introduction**

This exhibition will be showcased in The Historic Dockyard's No. 1 Smithery, as part of the Black History Live project in partnership with the Medway African and Caribbean Association and funded by National Lottery Players through the Heritage Lottery Fund. It is due to open on the 5 Oct and run until the 2 December 2018.

This revealing exhibition will celebrate the Black community of Kent over the centuries – from leading lights in the abolitionist movement in the 18th century to families making their homes in Kent. It aims to discover the challenges faced by the community and the remarkable stories of those who sought to make change.

MACA and the Trust are looking for a designer who has experience in both 2D and 3D design to develop and deliver an exhibition scheme that is not only exciting and engaging but sets the stories and images into an appropriate display aesthetic. The exhibition set up will need to take place between the 24<sup>th</sup> Sep and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct for a press launch on the 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. It is anticipated that the internal wall layout will stay the same (please see coinciding document). The first panel consisting of an introduction covering pre 18th Century Kent and providing a wider context to the exhibition.

## **Black History Live- Project Background**

The project will focus on the history of African and Caribbean people across Kent and Medway. It aims to tell the story of the inhabitants of the region from the 19/20th Century. Telling the story of their contribution to the region, how they arrived here, their work in the areas of trade, industry, what their life was like in the community, their contribution to the arts, education, science and technology. It will enable the wider community not just those that live in the region, but visitors to the region to develop a better understanding of the diversity of the region, in an attempt to redress racial and cultural stereotypes.

The project will unearth the history of the region and the people that lived there, through speaking to living descendants and current inhabitants to enable them to tell their story of what life was like for them living in the region from a diversity perspective. This will enable their stories to be passed onto future generations. We will also research local and national archives to explore the history of said inhabitants.

The project will also build on research from the Command of the Oceans project by utilising the data found on BME communities that worked in the dockyard to help build the exhibition, as well as research about African and Caribbean communities from Kent and Medway. The project aims to achieve a number of key deliverables: a Black History exhibition, at the Chatham Historic Dockyard in 2018, a learning resource, a documentary and a play.

Kent and Medway has a long history of racial tension, often based on racial stereotyping, and lack of information. This project aims to breakdown those barriers among different groups and help to dispel many of the myths that exist. It will provide a long lasting platform that will enable future generations to learn about the history of Black people in the region, but more importantly to be able to build on that history in years to come.

The project is important not just to those working on it, but because there has never been an opportunity such as this in Kent or Medway to capture the history of Black people in the region and tell it in such an innovative and engaging manner. There is a lot of information

available through local and national archives, but nothing captured in one place to any depth to our knowledge.

### **Exhibition Overview**

The exhibition will be divided into 6 key themes: Military/Emergency Services, Politics, Health, Religion, Sports, Arts and Society. Each theme will feature the known and unknown black history stories from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Celebrating the ‘untold stories’ to instil a sense of pride.

The exhibition will be very colourful, mainly image focused with minimal objects on display. There will also be an open space for performance and a section set dressed as 1960s front room.

Each theme is listed below with the key stories to tell. Shorter ‘unknown’ and more current stories will also be used in the exhibition to support the key stories in each theme.

#### **Military/ Emergency Services**

##### **William Brown**

“William BROWN” was nom-de-guerre for an African female born about 1794 who served as a “landsman” sailor aboard HMS Queen Charlotte (104 gun built Deptford 1810) in 1815. She was discharged once discovered. Thought to be the first Black African woman to serve for the Royal Navy

##### **James Brown**

James BROWN 1783- born Norwich. He was apparently living in Kent when on the 11th February 1804 he enlisted as a volunteer on board HMS Victory (one of 9 from the West Indies), the Chatham-built flagship of Admiral Nelson. He was promoted to Ordinary Seaman on the 23rd April 1804. He was on board HMS Victory during the battle of Trafalgar in 1805. He is shown on the pedestal of Nelson’s column taking aim with a musket at the Frenchmen in the mast tops who had shot Nelson. He was later promoted to Able Seaman and served on board HMS Ocean, HMS Salvador Del Mundo, and HMS Rhin. He ran from the last warship in 1809 and is lost to history thereafter.

##### **Walter Tull**

Walter Daniel John TULL 1888-1918 born Folkestone. In 1898 he was placed in an orphanage. He trained as a printer. In 1911 he became the 3rd black football player in the top English division. In 1914 he joined the “footballers battalion” in London. He was rapidly promoted to lance sergeant. In November 1915 his unit was deployed to France. He saw action in several battles and was hospitalised in 1916 with “shell shock”. In 1917 he became the 1st black commissioned officer in UK army after a formal colour bar had been added to the regulations. In 1918 in Italy he led a strong and successful patrol across a fast river and into no-man’s land. As a result he was mentioned in despatches for gallantry and leadership. In early March 1918 he returned to France. On the 20th March 1918 as a Second Lieutenant in the 5th battalion of the Middlesex Regiment he was killed in action leading a counter attack against the German spring offensive. His body was not recovered. Walter Tull since received the Military Cross. This section will also cover the contribution of the commonwealth to the First World War and Second World War (1 in 3 soldiers during WW1 were from British from colonies).

**Nowell Roberts**

First Black Police Constable in the London Met, the first black man to join CID and the first black man to get the Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. He arrived at the port of Dover at age nine when his mother from Anguilla before settling in Bromley, Kent.

**Sport****Walter Tull (See above)****Dame Kelly Holmes**

Dame Kelly Holmes was born in Kent in 1970. She served as a sergeant in the army before devoting herself to athletics full-time in 1997. In 2004, she won gold medals for the 800m and 1500m races at the Olympic Games in Athens, and was named BBC Sports Personality of the Year. She retired from athletics in 2005 and was made a Dame. She is Commonwealth Games England president and an adviser for the 2012 Olympics.

**Politics****Olaudah Equiano and the Teston Circle**

Olaudah Equiano c.1745-1797 born Nigeria died Middlesex England. A world class writer and campaigner for the abolition of slavery. He was enslaved at the age of about 11 years. He was bought by a Royal Naval officer and served aboard our HMS Namur in battle as a slave. He was subsequently sold again and worked aboard a merchant ship. In due course he was able to earn enough to purchase his freedom. He signed up and served as an Able. In 1786 in London, he became involved in the movement to abolish slavery. He was a prominent member of the 'Sons of Africa', a group of 12 black men who campaigned for abolition.

**Ignatius Sanchos**

British composer, actor, and writer. He is the first known Briton of African heritage to vote in a British election. He gained fame in his time as "the extraordinary Negro", and to eighteenth-century British abolitionists he became a symbol of the humanity of Africans and immorality of the slave trade. The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African, edited and published two years after his death, is one of the earliest accounts of African slavery written in English by a former slave of Spanish and English families.

**William Cuffay**

William CUFFAY 1788-1870 born Brompton Kent died Tasmania. A wonderful and famous man. Briefly he was the son of an ex-slave and became a trade union organiser and a leading member of the Chartist Association, campaigning for democratic political rights. He was transported to Australia and became a civil rights leader in Tasmania.

**Religion****Samuel Crowther**

Samuel Ajayi CROWTHER c1807-1891 born and died in Nigeria. As an eleven year old he was captured by slavers and was aboard a Portuguese slave-ship when he was rescued by the Royal Navy and settled in Freetown. He was a brilliant pupil at the Church Missionary Society School in Freetown, and at the CMS college in Islington England, before becoming the first student at the Fourah Bay College, which he and JF Schon (see below) would later reform. He was the best friend of Schon. They were both brilliant linguists and together discovered some 500 different languages or dialects in Sierra Leone, which is partly a reflection of the cosmopolitan nature of the Freetown area. Crowther and Schon together

were the linguists on the 1841 royally supported British expedition up the river Niger. When Schon moved to Chatham and then to Palm Cottage Crowther was a frequent visitor when in England. Crowther became the first black bishop in the Church of England. He was the bishop for West Africa.

### **Jacob Schon**

Jacob Friedrich SCHON 1803-1889 born Germany died at Palm Cottage Gillingham Kent. A wonderful warm listener who valued everybody and worked tirelessly to include Africans in everything. Educated Basel Seminary and the Church Missionary Society. Fabulous linguist, identifying with SA Crowther 500 languages and dialects in Sierra Leone. Together they were the linguists on the famous 1841 Niger expedition. Doctor of Divinity from Oxford University. With SA Crowther established Fourah Bay College in Freetown as the first university-level institution in Sub Saharan Africa. His first wife and daughter were Krio from Freetown. He would introduce his daughter to Queen Victoria who was so impressed with their qualities that the Queen placed Sarah Forbes Bonetta in the daily care of Schon and his third wife. After his health required him to leave Sierra Leone he settled in Chatham and then Palm Cottage. There he welcomed large numbers of friends from Africa. It was also an established part of the education of African missionaries at the CMS College in Islington that they should spend part of their courses with Schon at Palm Cottage. He also was the chaplain of Melville Hospital opposite Chatham Dockyard's main gate. This hospital helped sick dockyard workers and Royal Navy servicemen.

### **Health**

#### **Local Midwife**

Story of a local Midwife will be used to cover how the Windrush contributed to saving the NHS and how it is also the 70<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary of the NHS.

The story of the thousands of Caribbean and African women who answered the call 70 years ago to come to the UK to save the then ailing health service. It's a tale of a struggle to overcome racism, their fight for career progression and their battle for national recognition.

### **The Arts**

#### **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**

Samuel COLERIDGE-TAYLOR 1875-1912 born Holborn Middlesex died Croydon Surrey. Our volunteer Sue Searle is researching this man and his family. He was a child genius playing the violin. He became a very distinguished composer. He was the conductor for many years of the main choir in Rochester. He was the youngest delegate at the First Pan African Conference in 1900. BBC Radio 3 devoted an evening to his works in the last few days, featuring especially his Hiawatha songs. His father Daniel Peter Hughes Tayler (1849-1912) was a medical doctor born to a Creole (sometimes spelled Krio) family in Freetown in Sierra Leone. There is debate as to the extent to which his ancestry is from recently freed slaves from Nigeria or whether he derives mainly from the 1,200 Krio men and women from Nova Scotia who'd been slaves either in New York or in the Carolinas area of the USA. Dr Taylor went on to become the Royal Coroner in the British colony of the Gambia. He died in Bathurst (now Banjul) in 1904. Dr Taylor was unaware of Samuel's birth. Samuel's mother was Alice Hare Martin (1856 Dover – 1953 Thornton Heath near Croydon). Her parents were Benjamin Holmans (1813 Sandwich – 1896 Croydon) a

professional violinist and Emily Ann Martin (born 1835 in Greenwich Kent). We have photographs and articles about Samuel.

### **Fisk Jubilee Singers**

Fisk Jubilee Singers played extensively in Kent.

### **Society**

#### **Sarah Forbes Bonetta**

Aina Sarah Forbes BONETTA 1843-1880 born Nigeria died Madeira. At the age of 5 Aina was taken prisoner and given as a slave to King Ghezo of Dahomey. Two years later Commander Frederick Forbes RN the captain of HMS Bonetta was involved in anti-slavery operations in West Africa, as part of the long term programme initiated at Teston. He visited King Ghezo, where he was led to believe that little Aina was to be a human sacrifice. The captain persuaded the King instead to send the girl as a “gift from the King of the Blacks to the Queen of the Whites”. After a spell in Freetown Sierra Leone Aina was renamed as Sarah Forbes Bonetta and taken to England. There she was presented to Queen Victoria who was immensely charmed by Sally’s charm, vitality, and obvious intelligence. The Queen saw her on several further occasions and in 1858 invited her to stay with the Queen at Buckingham Palace as a guest at the marriage of the Queen’s oldest daughter. Sarah had previously been sent back to Freetown after developing a cough when living with the captain’s family in Berkshire. After Frederick Forbes had been killed in an accident in the south Atlantic, Sarah was returned to England, where the Queen placed her in the care of the Reverend and Mrs SCHON who lived in Chatham and then in Palm cottage, Gillingham. After Sarah’s own marriage the Queen became godmother of Sarah’s first born daughter. Sarah then lived with her husband and three children in Lagos, Nigeria. When her breathing troubles were diagnosed as tuberculosis she went to Madeira on doctor’s orders but she died there of TB. We have substantial details of her life and family. Many historians have written about her. We have very fine photographs by the most fashionable photographer in England.

### **Design Overview**

There are 6 main themes and sections to the exhibition, highlighted above. The exhibition must be very colourful, image focused and appealing to young people (11-25).

It is a community exhibition and thus a 10 minute documentary on loop and oral history recordings by UCA must also be displayed. In addition, a crossword featuring the names of key figures must be included in the exhibition. There must also be a place where people can play dominoes as this is a central aspect of the MACA’s senior group’s weekly meeting. If possible a creative writing piece on William Brown and Sarah Forbes Bonetta will also be included.

One section will include a set dressed 1960s front room. The final room will draw on a contributions from community workshops led by MACA. This workshop resulting in a community created front room with the story attached to the objects on a handwritten labels;

The layout should be designed to make the most of the images that are on display but should also help take the visitor to go on the journey. There should be a clear flow that takes the visitor methodically through each section, starting from the bottom left doorway on the mapped layout;

A large space should remain clear for performances.

The design should incorporate the use of reproduced images where possible to enhance the story – examples of personalities are included as part of the tender documentation;

An element of graphics/illustration must be used to make the story more appealing to young people (aged 11 to 25) and should be considered for each section – while this should not be a dominant factor, it needs to be incorporated and not an add on;

There is also a short documentary, made by UCA, visually depicting the key stories in the exhibition to show on a TV screen as part of the exhibition.

### **Gallery Specifications**

The gallery is 258 square metres and is a black box environment;

The internal walling system is modular and will not be moved for this exhibition (**please see layout in coinciding document**). They are 800 mm sections supported by a weighted aluminium frame.

There are floor boxes spaced evenly on a grid system throughout the gallery;

Gallery lighting is based on a track system. The lamps are Concord Beacon Muse – LEDs that are adjustable.

### **Exhibition Budget**

An overall budget of £20,000 has been set to deliver this exhibition. Of which up to £4500 has been allowed for exhibition designer fees.

### **What we are looking for**

- The exhibition designer should have experience in both 2D and 3D design;
- Have worked with a variety of media previously;
- A proven track record in delivering exhibitions to a high standard on time and on budget

To talk through the project and to arrange a site visit please call Alexandra Curson on 01634 823860 or [acurson@chdt.org.uk](mailto:acurson@chdt.org.uk).

**Procurement**

Procurement will be undertaken by CHDT on behalf of MACA and in accordance with its standard procedures.

**How to Respond**

- Company background and relevant experience
- Initial thoughts and approaches to the project
- A creative response with at least one concept worked up to give an impression of style
- Budget breakdown
- The spaces becomes available from 24<sup>th</sup> Sep and the exhibition will be launched on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct please include an outline of a programme of delivery to meet the opening.

**Please respond by the 4<sup>th</sup> July.**

Please send a paper copy and a digital copy of your response to Alexandra Curson whom will be coordinating this part of the exhibition on behalf of MACA:

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The Sail and Colour Loft  
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