

AFRICAN HISTORY SEASON EXHIBITION (Black History Month) October 13 – 15th 2022

The Project was a three-day exhibition, which was held from 13th to 15th October 2022 at The Barn, Christ Church, Abingdon.

The Exhibition was designed to highlight and celebrate the history, culture, achievements, and contribution of African heritage people to society.

The aim was to create a deeper sense of belonging, by building bridges between existing communities and those who have more recently moved to settle in Abingdon.

The organisers are members of the Racial Justice Group, a subset of Christ Church Abingdon's Justice and Inclusion Group (or J & I group). The J & I group was formed as a response to the horrific killing of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 and the injustices suffered by the Windrush Generation. The initial J & I focus was on Racial Justice, but widened to include other areas, such as Accessibility; Environment; Social Justice; Sexuality and Gender.

We are passionate about justice and aim to help create a society that is more equitable.

A programme was developed and featured exhibits of iconic historical people of African descent e.g. Marcus Garvey, Nelson Mandela. Mary Seacole, Olaudah Equiano and others.

There were pictures and biographies of present-day notable persons from the African diaspora, across the areas of Arts, Literature, Media, and Communications. Posters and fact sheets about different countries of the Caribbean were also displayed.

The Windrush generation exhibits featured:

- a typical Caribbean living room.
- a bookstall showing authors of African origin.
- artefacts from across Africa which were also on display.

In addition to the exhibits some interactive workshops were organised which involved local schools. The following section will outline the daily activities across the three days.

THURSDAY 13TH OCTOBER

Presentation 1 (Morning Session)

Baobab and Bananas: Botanical Folklore celebrating African and Caribbean folklore through Flora by Natty Mark Samuel

This was attended by a group of 50 year 6 students from a local primary school and approximately 20 adults.

COMMENTS

“Thank you for the wonderful presentation by Natty Mark. Inspiring and informative “

“Brilliant Exhibition, and a wonderful talk and songs from Natty Mark Samuels.”

Presentation 2 (Afternoon Session)

The Windrush Generation – by Junie James

Poetry – Evoking Belonging – by Dr. Dianne Regisford

This was attended by 60 year 9 students from a local secondary school and approx. 25 adults.

COMMENTS

“All of the students loved both sessions. It was educational and enjoyable, and we would love to be part of something like this every year.”

“We study race relations – and then find there is a whole lot more to learn. This was a most enjoyable way to add to my understanding.”

FRIDAY 14TH OCTOBER

Presentation 1 (Morning Session)

Cookery Demonstration – by Taiwo Oliwatuyi (Morning session)

Two types of food from Africa were presented in their natural state, then prepared and cooked. Attended by approximately 20 people from the Community. People were encouraged to try the tasty foods and really enjoyed them.

COMMENTS

“I have always wondered what these foods were. I will now buy them and try cooking at home “

Presentation 2 (Afternoon Session)

One Hand Can't Clap- Story Telling with Amantha Edmead

45 Year 5 students and 25 adults attended this event.

It was very interactive, great fun and was enjoyed by the students and teachers.

COMMENTS

“Amazing story telling, just brilliant.”

Presentation 3 (Evening session)

“SOLD” - a drama by Oxford Drama Group

The Play was based on the true story of the life of Mary Prince -a woman enslaved in Bermuda, her fight for liberation, and her advocacy for freedom. *“To be free is very sweet.”*

The play was attended by 92 people of mixed ages We had Christ Church Abingdon Youth group of about 20 young people and four leaders. They helped with welcoming the guests and serving Caribbean food prior to the event.

The Play lasted an hour and then there was a Q & A session which was challenging and thought provoking.

COMMENTS

“Extremely well written and performed, challenging and informative. We were left wanting to explore the message further.”

“The production was completely engrossing; the Q & A session offered different challenging perspectives on how we interpret our perceived history.

"An evocative and engaging play, performed by passionate and skilled actors, portraying truths and realities of the past, which still resonate today".

SATURDAY 15TH OCTOBER AM

Visitors were encouraged to view the Exhibition.

Mid – morning we had a live presentation of the Ghanaian King and Queen. This was preceded by a historical perspective given by Pastor Theodora Boakye Ansah.

Members of the group representing the Ashanti people of Ghana were resplendent, clothed in the many colours of the Kente Cloth.

There was a drama followed by traditional dancing, which included audience participation.

COMMENTS

“Loved the drama, dancing and presentation about Africa and Ghana by the Pearly Gates Church.”

“Enjoyed every moment, more people need to see this.”

“Will keep practicing my dance steps!”

“Very stately! The colours, the fabrics, the patterns. So enjoyable to fit African /Jamaican journeys into our diverse world. “

“Thank you for this extremely interesting Exhibition. We were just in time to see and hear the great music and dancers from Ghana. It was a wonderful sight.”

This event concluded our Exhibition.

COMMENTS ON THE EXHIBITION

“What a wonderful Exhibition. I have been completely overwhelmed by the variety of material and information.”

“From start to finish I have been engaged by the colour, pace, and professionalism of the programme.”

“I have enjoyed the involvement of the local primary and secondary schools, who clearly were enthused.”

“Thank you to those who made this happen. I hope there is more to come.”

“This was a beautiful project, well run.”

“I really hope it will continue for always. You have done a great job.”

“I was especially fascinated by the Historical records. Need more time to read them all.”

We would like to thank all our Sponsors, without whom this event would not have taken place.

Oxford Diocese

Abingdon Town Council

Abingdon County Council

Christ Church Abingdon

Additional Information re. Expenditure

Performers: The Play “Sold” - £600.00

Performer: Baobab and Bananas: Botanical Folklore celebrating African and Caribbean folklore through Flora by Natty Mark Samuel - £80

Refreshments: African-Caribbean food served before play - £740.00

The Windrush Generation: Caribbean Living Room Exhibition - £240.00