



Black History Month

22 October 2021

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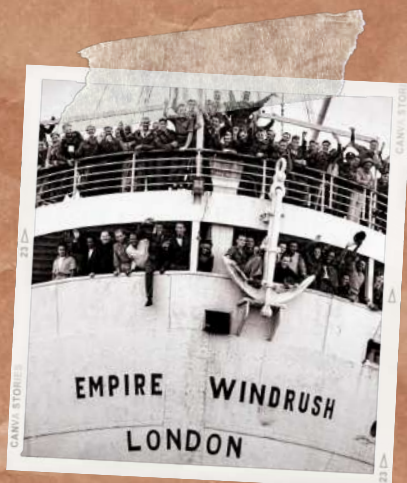
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At Highlands School, celebrating diversity is at the core of our school ethos, and underpinned by our DARE values. At Highlands School, Black History Month provides an opportunity to bring forth a period of reflection, traditional acknowledgement and a celebration of what has been achieved, and what is yet to come.

October is Black History Month in the UK, an event that has been celebrated nationwide for more than 30 years.

The month was originally founded to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to the UK over many generations.

Now, Black History Month has expanded to include the history of not just African and Caribbean people but black people in general.

The official theme for Black History Month 2021 is 'proud to be'. Catherine Ross, Editor at Black History Month UK, explained this year's theme: *'It's been a challenging time for many Black and Brown people, with so much in the media about racism, inequality and injustice. We wanted the theme of Black History Month 2021 to focus on celebrating being Black or Brown, and to inspire and share the pride people have in their heritage and culture – in their own way, in their own words.'*

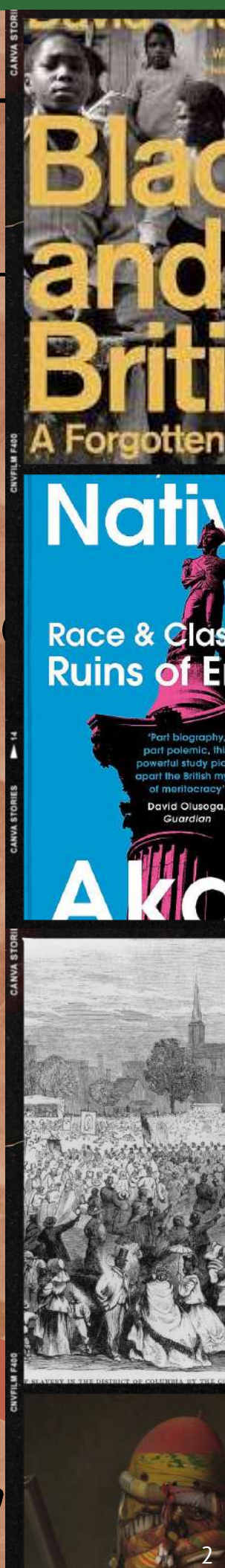
ASSEMBLIES

Throughout the week beginning 27th November students attended Black History Month assemblies. Students were asked to consider David Olusoga's, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Olusoga suggests that British history has, in some cases, been 'white-washed'.

As a result, Britain's historic, multi-racial society has been ignored. This distortion of the past, Olusoga continues, has contributed to racism and intolerance today. It is vital then that 'black history' and 'British history' are not viewed as two separate areas of study. Black history is an important part of British history.

Students were encouraged to engage independently with the themes discussed in the assembly. It was suggested that they read Akala's *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* and David Olusoga's, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. The latter is also available as a documentary series on BBC iPlayer.

It is important we understand how the past shapes the views we hold in the present. We must also ensure that we recognise that the past was rich and diverse. and if we do not, we run the risk of allowing racism and intolerance to thrive.



CELEBRATING CREATIVITY AND BLACK EXPRESSION

On Monday 4th October we hosted our Highlands Black history month conference: Celebrating creativity and Black expression.

All students across years 10-13 who study a creative arts subject attended the event. This was an opportunity for students with an interest in the creative arts to celebrate the successes of various Black creatives, network and ask questions.

The event was a huge success. Students heard inspiring stories of overcoming adversity, facing the real life challenges of trying to succeed in competitive fields, and lots of practical advice and suggestions for those who have a desire to work in the creative arts themselves.

At the end of the formal conference, a number of our students remained for a more intimate Q&A session with the guest speakers. This was an invaluable experience, where our students were given further insight into the working lives and experiences of our panelists.

The feedback from students was incredibly positive, and many stated the experience gave them a real insight into various careers in the creative arts.



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PANELISTS

**AMANI SIMPSON**

AMANI SIMPSON is an award-winning social entrepreneur and youth coach. His social enterprise is called Aviard Inspires CIC. It exists to empower young people through personal development, digital media and enrichment.

He is also the producer and protagonist of the 'AMANI' Short Film starring Joivan Wade which amassed 1 million views in 4 days and has been widely acclaimed by both youth and adults. It has now be viewed over 2.7 Million views! Amani is using his lived experience in schools, alternative provisions and at events as a tool to transform lives across the country with plans to expand internationally.

Recently, he was named North London Ambassador for the Mayor's 'London Needs You Alive' campaign. He was also nominated as a positive role model at the 2019 National Diversity Awards.

**SHOLAPE JEGEDE -
MUSIC MANAGEMENT**

Managed Hardy Caprio for a year which involved organisation videoshoot, liaising with the music label, attending to financial matters and negotiating recording contracts with other artists and producers.

**TOBI ODUNTAN -
DANCER AND ASSET
MANAGER**

I started my artistic journey performing on a West End musical age 11. Since then, I have gone on to work with: BTS, Pa Salieu, Mahalia, JD Sports & Redbull. Currently I train and perform with London based Definitive dance group.

**KAMILAH**

I am a broadcast journalist for BBC News. My current role consists of producing, writing the news to tight deadlines, reporting, and voicing my own pieces across BBC Radio 2, 3, 4 5 Live and 6 Music.

Prior to this, I worked as a journalist for BBC Voice, helping to launch and shape the UK's first interactive news service that allows users to delve deeper into stories that interests them. Before this,

I worked at BBC Newsbeat and 4Music writing articles, producing radio news packages, interviewing contributors and filming / editing social videos.



TUTOR TIME READING

We had a focus on Black History Month during our tutor time reading programme. This was an opportunity to celebrate the works of various Black writers and public figures as part of our dedicated reading programme.



Marcus Rashford's campaigning achievements;
Work with the charity FairShare to provide free school-meals for children in the Greater Manchester region.

Marcus was awarded a High Sheriff Special Recognition Award on 27 May, to acknowledge his "outstanding contribution to the community of Greater Manchester during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis."

In partnership with FareShare, £20m worth of funds had been raised which would provide meals for three million people.

Following a phone conversation with Marcus, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the implementation of the Covid summer food fund.

Received an honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester, to recognise his outstanding work. He was the youngest-ever person to be presented with an honorary degree and followed in the steps of Sir Alex Ferguson and Sir Bobby Charlton.

On the Queen's honours list for an MBE
Written a book, 'You are a Champion'.



Dr Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah was born and raised in Birmingham, England. Benjamin Zephaniah's background seems unlikely for a poet: a dyslexic who left school unable to properly read and write.

However, Zephaniah has ended up the people's poet. Today he holds a handful of honorary degrees. In 2008 he appeared in The Times list of top 50 post-war writers.

Zephaniah's poems are often inspired by political causes. His collections highlight domestic issues from institutional racism, to global environmental issues.

All students read Zephaniah's poem, 'The British' during tutor time and engaged in a class discussion focusing on issues such as culture, the evolution of British society and the key messages of the importance of inclusion and cultural diversity.

BLACK HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



To celebrate and honour Hackney's Windrush Generation, three sculptures of Caribbean fruits were unveiled earlier this month to commemorate the Caribbean community who migrated to the UK in 1948.

For those who are interested in viewing these sculptures, they are installed in two different locations at the heart of civic and community life in the borough, including outside Hackney Town Hall and St. Augustine's Tower



Explore the hidden history of African presence in the West End's theatre district with Theatreland Black History Walk. This trip will investigate and expose how far back the African/Caribbean presence on stage goes, who the performers were, where they appeared, audience reception and the racial climate at the time.

BHM Walk Time: Sunday 7 November at 10am
To book a walk [click here](#)



Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's Haunting Alongside Our Shadows will be on display at QUAD. Danielle's work is based in historical happening's, creating video-game inspired artworks that form part of her Black Trans archive to, as the artist states, "record the lives of Black Trans People in the present to imagine our existence in the past through immersive storytelling."