

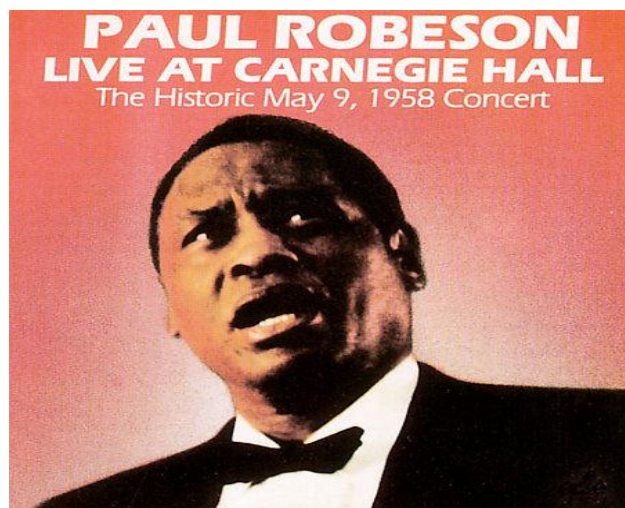
HSAP BRITISH BLACK HISTORY DIGEST 1 - SEPTEMBER 2011

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Contents: Why a Black History Digest?; October Diary; Diary November to March; News; Students at Oxford; Samuel Coleridge-Taylor News; Call Mr Robeson - News from Tayo Aluko; Tayo Plans *Call Mr Robeson* at Carnegie Hall; Haille Queen Brown; Valuing Our Colleagues; Captain Paul Cuffe Park Dedicated.

WHY A BLACK HISTORY DIGEST?

With the changes to the role of BASA (Black & Asian Studies Association) agreed at its June AGM, it is now difficult for many people to know about what is happening in the development of British Black History is readily available across our networks. A digest enables me to share information with my networks, and for members of those networks to share it with people that they know.



Courtesy of Tayo Aluko

OCTOBER DIARY

Note: For Call Mr Robeson event details click on blue name of theatre and town, or look at Tayo Aluko's site: www.callmrrobeson.com.

To 9 October. Brank & Heckle. Exhibition by Ruth Ewan. Dundee Contemporary Arts, 152 Nethergate, Dundee, DD1 4DY. It features features a newly-commissioned sculpture based on photographs of a statue of Paul Robeson that went missing in the 1940s in suspicious circumstances. Archive material relating to Robeson's career and his experience of racism and political persecution is presented alongside tomatoes of the black-fleshed variety Paul Robeson, specially grown for display in the galleries. Also on display is a jukebox hosting over 2,000 progressively themed or idealistic songs, entitled *A Jukebox of People Trying to Change the World*, allows gallery visitors to select music to accompany their visit. The CDs are ordered into many categories including poverty, feminism and civil rights, creating a catalogue of the past, present and possible future of opposition and idealism. Nae Sums 1911 - 2011 references an imagined slogan from Dundee's school strike of 1911 using large letters made from reclaimed school desks. These letters use the unique Menzieshill typeface created by Ewan with the help of children from Menzieshill High School. She has also invited social historian Siobhan Tolland to lead a guided walk around the city, focusing on the part played by women and children in Dundee's remarkable radical history. The walk features drawings and ideas generated by an artist's workshop with pupils from Menzieshill. www.dca.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/brank-heckle.html.

Saturday 1 October: 10am-6pm and Sunday 2 October: 10am-5pm. Black History Live Seminars and Workshops. Wembley Stadium. Admission - Tickets £6 (under 14's have FREE admission when accompanied by a full paying adult). Includes: visit the Arctic with Dwayne Fields, Caribbean and African Language links with Dr Morgan Dalphinis Linguist, Reflections with Victor Richards, readings by for Haitian child slave Jean-Robert Cadet ('My Stone of Hope') and former Black Panther Robert King ('A Cry from the Bottom of the Heap'), advice from Gangline on how communities can help in the battle against gang crime, the Black Police Association talking about policing in a modern, diverse Britain, and the challenges and opportunities it represents, plus music, a play and talks about Mary Seacole, and The BBC4 documentary *Tales from the Front Room* followed by discussion with Dr Michael McMillan, editor of the book that inspired the film. There also be a showing of the film *African Superheroes*, Caribbean Family History Group on how to trace your family history, Black Cultural Archives exploring its Ansel Wong collection. Plus lots more; health and beauty, diabetics management, the history of black hair, hair care, media training, AND becoming a DJ. More details on www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=214%3Ablack-history-live-wembley-stadium&catid=85%3Aevents&Itemid=75.

Sat 1 October. 2pm. Burning an Illusion. Film. UK 1981. Dir Menelik Shabazz. 105min. 15. Shot in Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove the film traces the emotional and political growth of a young black couple in Thatcher's London. National Film Theatre. Part of BFI African Odysseys film festival. BFI, Southbank, London, SE1. Tickets £5; 020 7928 3232. Full programme on www.bfi.org.uk.

Saturday 1 October. 7pm. Call Mr Robeson (shortened 60-minute version). At International Brigade Memorial Trust 75th Anniversary Gala. Also poetry by Jackie Kay. New Red Lion Theatre Pub, 271 City Rd, London, EC1.

Sunday 2 October. Art as a Weapon. Tayo Aluko & Friends; see: http://cmr.tayoalukoandfriends.com/performances/Art%20as%20a%20weapon_eflyer.pdf.

Sunday 2 October. 2-4pm. The Black Communities of Ordsall and Greengate, 1896-1930 by Bill Williams at Victoria Baths, Hathersage Road, Manchester. The talk describes the evolution of these two 'colonies', what little is known of their way of life, and their relationship with the wider societies around them.

Tuesday 4 October. 6.30pm. Pan-African Conferences by Marika Sherwood. Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. Black political activists realised they had to get together to fight discriminations and inequalities, whether here or in the colonies. The first conference, organised by Henry Sylvester Williams was held in London in 1900. One remarkable feature was that there were two Black women speakers. Many of the men who took their countries into independence attended these historic gathering. Free - booking essential (020) 8871 7466.

Wednesday 5 - Sunday 9 October. 10.30am-4.30pm. Treasures of the Black Cultural Archives. Brockwell Hall, Brockwell Park, Lambeth.

Wednesday 5 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Theatr Elli, Llanelli](#)

From Thursday 6 October. Archival Tales: Uncovering Inter-war Black History. Free exhibition prepared by Gemma Romain delves deep into the Library's collections to uncover hidden Black histories from 20s and 30s Britain. Women's Library.

Thursday 6 October. 5pm. Roundtable on the Legacies of British Slave Owning Project. Catherine Hall, Nick Draper, and Keith McLelland (UCL). Bedford Room G37, Senate House. British History 1815-1945 Seminar.

Thursday 6 October. 6.30pm. The Life of Jane Roberts - wife of Liberia's first president. Sean Creighton. Putney Library, Disraeli Rd, London, SW15. Free but booking essential: 020 8871 7090.

Joint Wandsworth Black History Month and A Taste of Liberia Festival (UK) 2011.
www.atasteofliberiefestival.wordpress.com.

Thursday 6 October. 7-9pm. Culture Shock. Workers' Educational Association, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums Service and Beamish Museum examination of personal stories of people who have come to live on Tyneside, or have grown up in the area. Nuns Moor Children's Centre, Studley Terrace, Newcastle. To book a place contact the WEA on 0191 212 6100 or northeast@wea.org.uk.

Friday 7 October. 7.30pm. 'The History of Transatlantic Slavery: How important are Narratives by Former Slaves in Understanding this Subject?' Lecturer: Professor David Richardson, Director of the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation, University of Hull. Markham Hall, St James's School, Grimsby. Historical Association Branch event.

Saturday 8 October. Call Mr Robeson. [The Forge, Basingstoke](#)

Sunday 9 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis](#)

Monday 10 October. 7.30pm. Mary Seacole: The life and achievements of this Jamaican/Scottish Crimean War nursing heroine. Lecturer: Professor Elizabeth Anionwu, Emeritus Professor, Thames Valley University. Friends' Meeting House, Greyfriars (off Southgate Street), Gloucester. £3/£1 visitors. Historical Association branch event. For further details please contact the secretary, Robert Sutton, tel: 01242 574889.

Monday 10 October. 6.30pm. Panos de Terra by Cliff Pereira. Follow the story of an extraordinary textile that reflects the technology of Africans, yet played an important part in the story of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and whose memory was transported by enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and Brazil. Back in Africa this textile became the icon for high fashion and achieved cult properties. Free - booking essential (020) 8871 7175. Tooting Library, 75 Mitcham Road, SW17 9PD

From Tuesday 11 October. *The Slave-owners of Bloomsbury*. Exhibition by The Legacies of British Slave-ownership Project explores the contentious lives and legacies of those slave-owners who lived in the Bloomsbury area. South Cloisters at Univ Central London (UCL). More information is available here: <http://events.ucl.ac.uk/event/event:cl-gqc602ec-1om7o1>.

Wednesday 12 October. 2pm. Len Johnson: Never Counted Out! Talk by Michael Herbert. Johnson was one of the finest middle-weight boxers of his day, but was never allowed to fight for an official British title because of his colour. In the 1940s he joined the Communist Party, fighting against racism and discrimination with the same skill and determination that he once shown against his opponents in the ring. Working Class Movement Library, Salford.

Thursday 13 October. 5.30pm. 'The Decoy Elephant?: British Anti-Slavery and the Scramble for African Empire'. Lecturer: Dr Richard Huzzey, University of Plymouth. University of Exeter History Department Amory Building. Historical Association Branch event. Email: rguyver@marjon.ac.uk.

Friday 14 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Goosfest, Goostrey, Cheshire](#)

Tuesday 18 October 6.30pm. Pan-Africanism and Communism by Dr Hakim Adi. An illustrated talk on the forgotten history of the black revolutionaries who fought against racism and colonialism and for liberation and socialism in Africa, the Caribbean, the US, Britain and Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. Free - booking essential (020) 8871 7466.

Tuesday 18 - Sunday 23 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Unicorn Theatre, London](#). Unicorn Performances sponsored by: Camp Leaders, Marx Memorial Library, PCS, Smamer Earth and Unison Greater London.

Wednesday 19 October 6.30pm. Kanga by Cliff Pereira. The Kanga is said to have over a hundred uses from baby carrier to popular Islamic wear. However this colourful and popular fabric that typifies Eastern Africa has an intriguing and international history over five centuries of trade, exploitation, colonialism and development in the Indian Ocean. Historical geographer Clifford Pereira FRGS who hails from Mombasa in Kenya provides an interesting talk on this East African textile. Free - booking essential (020) 8871 7090. Putney Library 5/7 Disraeli Road, SW15 2DR.

Wednesday 19 October. 6.30pm. Malcolm X. Working Class Movement Library, Salford. Marika will discuss the visits of activist Malcolm X to Britain in 1964, including a meeting he addressed in Manchester which she has used interviews, newspaper and individuals' memories to recreate.

Thursday 20 October. 6.30pm. Marika will be speaking at the University of Manchester courtesy of the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust. Places bookable via rrarchive@manchester.ac.uk or 0161 275 2920.

Thursday 20 October. 6.30pm. The Mau Mau Case: abuse, torture and cover up under British colonial rule? London School of Economics. Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building. Speakers: Professor David Anderson, Dr Huw Bennett, Daniel Leader.

Thursday 27 October. 8pm. 'Three rebellions against Empire: Canada 1837, India 1857, Zululand 1906'. Lecturer: Dr. John Darwin, Beit Reader in the History of the British Commonwealth, University of Oxford. Vestry Hall, 21 Paradise Road, Richmond, London, TW9. Historical Association Branch event. Visitors £2. For further information, please contact the Secretary, Richard Turk. Tel: 07958 729 526, email richardgturk@yahoo.com.

Friday 28 - Saturday 29 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Hull Truck Theatre](#)

Friday 28 October. 6-8pm. The 1945 Pan African Congress: Manchester's Contribution. Speaker Washington Alcott. New Black Arts Alliance, opposite Band on the Wall, Swan Street, Manchester. Mancunians were intimately involved in the 5th Pan African Congress which took place in Manchester in 1945. The congress was instrumental in changing British Colonial Empire after the Second World War. The talk investigates how local people were involved in its planning and in decisions that reshaped the future governance in Africa and the Caribbean.

Saturday 29 October. 11am-4pm. A Taste of Liberia Festival - a celebration of our past present and future. The Wilditch Community Centre, Battersea, London, SW11. A range of activities for the whole family, inc: workshops, film screening, discussion and debate, cookery, cultural dancing and many more. Organisations will be hosting stalls and selling items in the Marketplace. Items on Liberia will be on sale. Entrance is £7.00 including raffle ticket. For more information contact 0798 356 4645 or 0796 471 8422. www.atasteofliberianfestival.wordpress.com.

Saturday 29 October. 11am-5pm. African Odysseys: Remembering Cy Grant. Triple Bill celebrating the life of Guyanese lawyer, singer, writer, broadcaster, cultural activist, actor. In the drama *They Met in a City: The Encyclopaedist* [tx 11/4/61. BBC. Written by John Mortimer. 30min], a salesman from Trinidad tries to sell a set of encyclopaedia to a housewife on London's Chelsea-Fulham border. The documentary *Freedom Road: Songs of Negro Protest* [tx 5/2/64). Associated Rediffusion. Dir Robert Fleming. 40 min] tells the story of the unceasing struggle for racial equality through protest songs archive, photos and prints. *£5.00 or £7.50 combined ticket for Spike Lee's film: Miracle at St. Anna* (2008, 140min). British Film Institute - Box Office: 020 7928 3232.

Saturday 29 October. 2.30-5pm. Soft Lights and Sweet Music. Elisabeth Welch on Screen. The Cinema Museum, 2 Dugard Way, London, SE11. Elisabeth Welch's biographer, Stephen Bourne, will share his personal memories of the stage and screen legend. Born in New York, Elisabeth settled in London in 1933. Her 70-year career included work with Ivor Novello, Cole Porter and Derek Jarman, and she performed in West End musicals throughout. A sophisticated interpreter of popular songs,

British audiences were drawn to Elisabeth's soft, lovely voice and charming personality. Stephen will illustrate his talk with some rare and wonderful film extracts from his private collection. Ticket prices: £10 advance, £8 concessions. Cinema Museum: www.cinemamuseum.org.uk/2011/elisabeth-welch-on-screen-stephen-bourne.

Sunday 30 October. 8pm-late. Liberian Artists in Concert. Music & Vision - Arch 269, Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, SW9. A mixture of bands and popular Artists will be playing their own music as well as Liberian favourites. Tickets £8. For further information contact 0798 356 4645 or 0796 471 8422. www.atasteofliberiafestival.wordpress.com.

Sunday 30 October. Call Mr Robeson. [Norwich Puppet Theatre](#) (with Norwich Stop the War Coalition)

DIARY NOVEMBER TO MARCH

Thursday 10 November. Call Mr Robeson. [Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough](#)

Thursday 10 November. 7.15pm. 'Britain and the American Civil War'. Lecturer: David Waller (University of Northampton). St Matthews Parish Centre, Northampton. Northampton Historical Association. Preceded by AGM. www.history-northampton.org.uk. For further details please contact Dr Philip Coupland (Hon. Secretary) 15 Oswald Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 0HN. 01933 390387. drpmc66@ntlworld.com.

Tuesday 15 November. 7pm. Britain and the American Civil War. Lecturer: Dr Richard Huzzey, University of Plymouth. Theatre 2, Roland Levinsky Building, University of Plymouth. Visitors £5/£3. This is a joint programme of Historical Association Branch and History Department at the University of Plymouth. For more information, please contact Alan H. Cousins, 3 Fore Street, St Germans, Cornwall PL12 5NR. Tel. 01503 230106, email a.cousins345@btinternet.com.

Thursday 17 November. Call Mr Robeson. [Rose Theatre, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk](#)

Wednesday 23 - Friday 25 November. Call Mr Robeson. [Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford](#)

December - March 2012. Call Mr Robeson will be at Bridport, Dorchester, Bridgewater, USA, Pwllleli, Holyhead, Sale, Hertford, Maidstone, Crawley and Cumbernauld. www.callmrrobesson.com

NEWS

Adelaide Hall. On Monday 19 September (10-11pm) BBC Radio 2 broadcast *Strong And Sassy - Inspiring Women Of Jazz 3: ADELAIDE HALL*, presented by Moira Stuart with Stephen Bourne who wrote the biography *Sophisticated Lady: A Celebration of Adelaide Hall*. A central figure in the great resurgence of African-American music that began in the Harlem Renaissance of the Twenties, Adelaide performed with Duke Ellington, Art Tatum and Fats Waller. Listeners hear how Adelaide started out in music, and then settled in London to become one of Britain's best-loved entertainers.

Sophisticated Ladies. On Thursday 22 September Stephen Bourne celebrated three glamorous stars of 1930s British cinema included in the National Portrait Gallery's Collection: Elisabeth Welch, Merle Oberon and Anna May Wong.

Call Mr Robeson. Tayo ALuko performed his show in Merthyr Tydfil on 21, Newport on 22, Swansea on 23 and Lancaster on 24 September. The review of the Newport event can be seen on <http://andyhowells.suite101.com/paul-robasons-career-remembered-on-stage-in-call-mr-robesson-a390117> and www.southwalesargus.co.uk/leisure/reviews/9268416.Call_Mr_Robeson_The_Riverfront.

North East Slavery & Abolition Group. The latest Newsletter of the Group is available from me or can be seen on: www.twmuseums.org.uk/archives/publications. Information and links for the North East

Region Tyne & Wear Remembering Slavery Website and the NESAG's Newsletters have recently been placed on Newcastle based Intercultural Arts Project website.

Black History Calender. 100 Black Men of London has started a black history calendar on its website. Anyone can submit dates for inclusion. See www.100bmol.org.uk/history-calendar/month.calendar/2011/09/08/- .html

Scotland's Role in the Slavery Business. In August Allen Lane published Tom Devine's book *To The Ends of the Earth. Scotland's Global Diaspora 1750-2010*. Devine is Professor of History at the University of Edinburgh. On 23 and 24 August *The Times* published two long and illustrated articles by Devine: *Revealed: Scotland's shocking role in Caribbean slave trade*, and *How Scotland kept the lid on its dirty secret*. Details of Devine's views and those of others can be seen on BBC's Making History website: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tt5hx. A review of the book in the *Herald Scotland* can be seen on www.heraldscotland.com/books-and-poetry/reviews/tom-devine-to-the-ends-of-the-earth-scotland-s-global-diaspora-1750-2010-allen-lane-1.1116021.

Charlie Andrews, Newcastle Missionary to India. Anglo Sikh Heritage organised a talk by Sohan Singh of the Newcastle Sikh Temple on 8 September at Newcastle City Library about Charlie Andrews, the Anglican Missionary born in Newcastle, who was active in India in the first half of the 20th Century. He was a close friend of Gandhi and before Charlie died, Gandhi's first choice for President of an Indian Republic. He did a lot of good work in the slums of Monkwearmouth and other places in the North East before he left for India. There are 16 biographies of Andrews, and as an example of what people in the know think of him, here is a quote from T. Sher Singh: 'You and I have been taught about William Wilberforce who helped abolish the idea of slavery. Well, I believe that the history books should also similarly sing about Charles Freer Andrews because he helped abolish the idea of Indentured Labor, which was then as much of a plague as slavery had been (and to a large extent continued to be in some parts of the world).' (www.sikhchic.com/article-detail.php?cat=12&id=115).

Plaque Unveilings: Claudia Jones and Rhaune Laslett. These two plaques by Nubian Jak Community Trust were put up on Friday 26 August.

Colin Chambers Interview. Colin, who is Professor of Drama at Kingston University, and a former journalist and literary manager of the RSC, talks to Suman Bhuchar about the long and previously obscure history of African, Asian and Caribbean diasporic practitioners as recounted in his new book, *Black and Asian Theatre in Britain* (Routledge). www.theatrevoice.com/6863/professor-colin-chambers-explores-the-history-of-black-and-asian-theatre-22.

William Sheppard and the Belgium Congo. Do any of you have a copy of the report William Sheppard wrote for his Presbyterian paper that King Leopold's company sued him for? If you do please let me know as Tayo Aluko (*Call Mr Robeson*) would like a copy as preparation for a new play he is writing.

The Politics of Paul Robeson's Othello. This book by Lindsey R. Swindall examines the historical and political context of acclaimed African American actor Paul Robeson's three portrayals of Shakespeare's Othello in the United Kingdom and the United States. Published by the University Press of Mississippi.

Paul Robeson and Native Land. See www.berkeleyside.com/2011/09/27/native-land-at-pfa-and-a-berkeley-film-festival-hits-20/comment-page-1.

Stephen Bourne was interviewed by Lenny Henry about West Indians involvement in World War Two in *National Treasures Live* on BBC1 on Wednesday 10 August. Much of the piece was Henry talking with Sam King, ex-serviceman and former Mayor of Southwark.

Country House and Slavery. It seems a long time ago that English Heritage and the National Trust ran the Conference on Slavery and the British Country House. A summary of four of the studies undertaken in the EH project can be seen on the English Heritage website: www.english-

heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/the-slave-trade-and-abolition/slavery-and-the-british-country-house. The full texts of these studies can be seen on the website by search for slavery on the page: www.english-heritage.org.uk/book-and-buy/books.

William Beckford. October's History Today contains an article by Richard Gemmett 'The Two Faces of William Beckford showing how his lifestyle was funded by the exploitation on his Caribbean slaves.

STUDENTS AT OXFORD

In 2004 I produced a note on approaching research into the Black Presence in Oxfordshire. This was posted on Dan Lyndon's Black History4Schools website: blackhistory4schools.co.uk/.../Oxfordshire%20black%20history.doc. Jeff Green has informed me that the following black alumni can be added.

Cornelia Sorabji studied law at Somerville around 1890; see Antoinette Burton, *At the Heart of Empire* (Uni of California, 1998)

Alain Leroy Locke, the first African American Rhodes Scholar, as at Hertford 1907-1910.

Pixley Seme, later active in the ANC, was at Jesus in 1907 and became a friend of Locke.

Edward Nelson of British Guiana was at St John's and an officer of the Union 1900-1901.

A. E. Maxwell Gibson (probably from Gambia) graduated at Wadham in 1897 and later mixed with Seme and Locke in Oxford in 1907, taking the MA and BCL degrees.

All four men are mentioned in Jeff's *Black Edwardians* and in his *A Black Edwardian Rhodes Scholar in Oxford*. Dec 1988. Vol XL. No 2. Some are in Jeff's new biography of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Lushington Wendell Bruce James was at Keble around 1910. Born on Antigua in 1891 he had been raised in British Guiana. His daughter's autobiography is Ann Franklin Bowes. *From Your Daddy* (Athena Press, 2006).

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR NEWS

SC-T Network. In May the Network started a website: <https://sites.google.com/site/samuelcoleridgetaylornetwork>. It has been regularly updated over the last month.

SC-T Plaque. I noticed that the Open Plaques website had the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's plaque image up instead of SC-T's at Dagnall Park in Croydon. The people involved have now put up the correct image, see: <http://openplaques.org/plaques/136>. This is an important site because it not only now has registered over 7,500 plaques, including the two most recent ones to Claudia Jones and Rhaune Laslett-O'Brien, but also has a list of all the organisations that have put up plaques. As yet they do not have the images for Ira Aldridge's plaque: <http://openplaques.org/plaques/301> nor for several of Nubian Jak's plaques.

Jeff Green on SC-T. Jeff's book *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a Musical Life* was published in June by Pickering and Chatto of London is a first rate substantial addition to our knowledge of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and very helpful correction to a lot of material that is posted on the web. But it is a lot more than that. It adds considerably to our knowledge of Black residents and visitors in the late Victorian and Edwardian period and especially the Black Atlantic networking. It improves our understanding of the musical worlds in which the composer operated. It leaves plenty of room for others to follow up including more detailed work on various local areas in terms of SC-T's personal links, the playing of his music up to and after 1912, and analysis of the music itself. My more detailed comment can be seen on the Network website. Jeff is also author of *Swing from a Small Island: the Story of Leslie Thompson* reissued in 2009 by Northway Publications. For the SC-T biography see

www.pickeringchatto.com/taylor. Jeff is a prolific writer of short notes which he posts on his website www.jeffreygreen.co.uk.

CALL MR ROBESON - NEWS FROM TAYO ALUKO



Courtesy of Tayo Aluko

‘Robeson has certainly taken me on some interesting journeys in the last few years! In the space of a week or so, while staying in Springdale, Connecticut during the New York Fringe, I felt the earth move as an earthquake struck hundreds of miles away in Virginia. I then found myself barricaded alone in a house sheltering from a fearsome woman Irene - (the hurricane). But thankfully, here I am, safe and sound, back in Liverpool and urging to tell folks in and around London about an event I am organising on 2nd October - the beginning of UK's Black History Month. ‘

Discussing his recent trip to the United States Tayo writes: ‘FringeNYC turned out to have been a critical success, notwithstanding the forced cancellation of the final (sold-out) performance because of Irene. Two reviews are particularly pleasing: [CurtainUp](#) (“*Potent and illuminating*”) and [nytheatre.com](#) (“*An impassioned, dignified performance*”), not just because they said nice things about the play, but because they said so much about the great man himself.’

‘New York also had one or two nice things to offer. I attended a lovely outdoor jazz concert in Harlem right by Jumel Terrace, where the Robesons lived when he gave his defiant testimony to the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in 1953. I also had the honour of visiting the apartment that they stayed in around the corner at 555 Edgecombe Avenue, and spending time with the current occupant!

At the beginning of August, I attended the [National Black Theatre](#) Festival in Winston-Salem. A most energising and inspiring week! I was expecting to be only a spectator, but found myself participating in readings of some fine new plays - five in all - including one titled Paul Robeson in Berlin! It is (thankfully?) not a one-man play with a lot of singing, but a thriller about a day he and Essie spent in Berlin and found out about the persecution of jews under Hitler. A very powerful piece that I look forward to seeing in full production one day.

A fortnight or so later, I met yet another person writing another Robeson play too - this time, in Harlem! I wish them success too. It's good to know that Mr. Robeson's voice is rumbling, arising from underground, refusing to be silenced...

It has been a spectacularly rewarding month, considering the many remarkable and helpful people I have met, so with any luck, it will lead to invitations for me to perform in various parts of the US (and maybe the Caribbean) in the months to come. I will update you with any news on this as and when I have it.'

TAYO PLANS CALL MR ROBESON AT CARNEGIE HALL

Tayo is planning to stage *Call Mr Robeson* at Carnegie Hall.

'And so to Carnegie Hall . February 12th 2012 is my 50th birthday, and I will be performing *Call Mr. Robeson* at this world-famous venue. Three interesting things about the venue and the date: 1. On May 9 1958, Robeson announced from the main stage to a full house that he had finally succeeded in getting his passport back after the State Department had illegally cancelled it eight years earlier. 2. February 12 is the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. 3. February is Black History Month. I think these three things persuaded Carnegie Hall to accept the idea of a crazy unknown Nigerian celebrating an American Icon.

I have launched fundraising campaign for this brave expedition, and hope you and/or others you may know will be able to help me get there. ... Please spread the word in any way you can, and I look forward to seeing some of you at Carnegie Hall on February 12th next year!' Details on www.indiegogo.com/Call-Mr-Robeson-at-Carnegie-Hall-New-York-February-12-2012.'

HALLIE QUEEN BROWN

Jeff Green is working on a new book about Black visitors to Britain up to 1897 in which he will give a summary of the person when in Britain, leaving clues and sources for others to follow up. Here is his piece on Hallie Queen Brown.

There was soon another famous African American woman in Britain. Hallie Quinn Brown lectured and sang, presenting British audiences with stories about her people. In Dundee in February 1896 she spoke on 'Women and the Drink Question' at the Gilfillan Memorial Church, at nearby Broughty Ferry she gave a 'dramatic and humorous recital' on 18 February, and later her talk was on 'Negro Education' at a Congregational church, which she ended by singing 'Steal Away'.^[i] Born in 1850 she had been educated at and currently worked as professor of rhetoric at Wilberforce University in Ohio, and had worked at Booker Washington's Tuskegee Institute.^[ii] The Era reported her dramatic and musical recital found great favour.^[iii] She recited at a gathering for the United Temperance Council in Glasgow on 22 April, and was still in Dundee in October, met with a spell of illness, and was back on stage in mid-November.^[iv] Proceeds of these concerts were for the education of black Americans. She was in Perth at the end of January 1897 and in Aberdeen in March 1897.^[v] Years later she met with Jane Rose Roberts (the Liberian president's widow) in London in 1910, at the home of a British-born black politician, John Archer.^[vi] She died in Ohio in 1949.

^[i] Dundee Courier, 8 February 1896, p 1; Dundee Courier, 18 February 1896, p 4; Dundee Courier, 26 February 1896, p 3.

^[ii] Susan Kates, 'The Embodied Rhetoric of Hallie Quinn Brown', *College English*, Vol 59, No 1 (January 1997), pp 60, 62.

^[iii] Era (London), 22 February 1896.

^[iv] Glasgow Herald, 22 April 1896; Dundee Courier, 21 October 1896, p 4; Dundee Courier, 19 November 1896, p 4.

^[v] Dundee Courier, 1 February 1897, p 3; Aberdeen Weekly Journal, 24 March 1897.

^[vi] Hallie Quinn Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* (Xenia, Ohio: Aldine Publishing, 1926), p 48.

Comment: A Google look at Brown suggests she is a very important and interesting person. In his correspondence with Bruce in the States about becoming Mayor John Archer said he was still receiving letters of congratulation. Among those he prized most was one from Brown.

VALUING OUR COLLEAGUES

The British Black History Networks are full of people who have made great contributions to advancing our knowledge and understanding, and who should be valued.

Jak Beulah. Jak's work on plaques through the Nubian Jak Community Trust was subject of *Guardian* writer Hugh Muir's column on Wednesday 31 August: *Hideously diverse as Britain. Signs of a changing history.* The Nubian Jak website is: www.nubianjak.com/default.aspx.

Stephen Bourne. Marika Sherwood has sent the following letter about Stephen to *Southwark News*: 'I have known Stephen Bourne for over twenty years. In 1991 we were among the founders of the Black and Asian Studies Association. That was the year Stephen published his first Black British history book, the award-winning *Aunt Esther's Story*. Since that time, Stephen has written several ground-breaking books on the subject, including a history of Southwark's Black community. Since the 1990s he has been a regular contributor to - and champion of - Southwark's Black History Month (BHM) programmes. I am now very disappointed to learn that Stephen's proposal to offer a short BHM course this year was turned down and some unacceptable alternatives were offered. A talk on a Sunday afternoon, which, as Stephen pointed out, would be a waste of time as no-one would turn up for such an obscure slot. The second alternative then offered was a talk at Peckham Library, but without the offer of the usual speaker's fee. This seems to me to demonstrate a very negative attitude not only to Stephen, but to Black History Month. Surely Stephen should be appreciated by the Council not only for his work on the history of Black peoples in the Borough, but for his voluntary work for Southwark Police as an independent advisor, as well as the work he has undertaken to raise the profile of the local LGBT community. Perhaps Southwark Council would consider conferring on Stephen the Freedom of the Borough!' Stephen's website is at www.stephenbourne.co.uk.

CAPTAIN PAUL CUFFE PARK DEDICATED

Herman Ross has drawn our attention to the opening of the Paul Cuffe Park in New Bedford, New England - see: www.whalingmuseum.org. 'Paul Cuffe (1759-1817) was the free-born son of an African father and a native American mother. A skilful mariner, he was also a successful merchant, philanthropist, community leader, civil rights advocate and abolitionist. In 1780 he petitioned for the right to vote as a landowner and taxpayer. He established the first integrated school in America and became an advisor to President James Madison.' Guests at the opening held at the New Bedford Whaling Museum included Cuffe descendants and native Americans.

Ross comments: Since Captain Paul Cuffe was born British and started the concept of his life as a free British subject ... he represents a focus upon the inclusion of British African-Americans in a positive direction during the stages in British history when being an African descendant was being pushed to the lower depths of class and class by race was being promoted vigorously as natural. Cuffe represented what was to become the American spirit. Captain Cuffe has been a neglected legacy in black America because of not working within the contemporary invested pursuits of the general vision of our past. He did what he wanted to do and was not only successful economically but respected for his real, physical and invested stance as an abolitionist. In looking into Cuffe's story we find a man who financed and navigated personally the first 'back to africa' movement, created the first integrated school in what had become the United States of America with African and American Indian teachers, set the foundation for African descendants to vote if they were landowners, traded with his fleet of vessels from the Baltic to the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico as well as within the slave owning British colonies and eventual American States with only black and indian crews. This dedication of a Captain Paul Cuffe Park, while seemingly a small token for a man who did so much, can be used as an example of respect for a positive image of an African descendant who successfully worked with a conscience balanced with his occupation in a forming society that was being based on racial and class division.