



Emanuel School

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Monday 14th October 2024

FROM THE HEADMASTER

Mr R Milne

Whilst we have plenty more to learn, do and achieve, we have come a long way as a school community when it comes to listening and talking about race, ethnicity and culture.

We have maintained the variety of clubs based on these topic areas, and most importantly, we are starting to see change to school life. This might be through our actions, thoughts or words.

As said, we have more to reflect on and come to know, but we are open to this and thanks to the approaches across the school, we moving along with a sense of optimism.

NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

Mrs Alleyne-Graham

Nottinghill Carnival was created in 1959 by Claudia Jones, it was first held in St Pancras town hall in January. In 1966 the carnival moved from the town hall to the streets in the guise of a "street fayre" for children in Notting Hill where a Trinidadian Jazz and "pan" musician Russell Henderson livened things up by leading his steel pan band and the children through the streets. From these early days carnival has grown year on year and is known as the biggest street festival in Europe, and the second largest in the world with Rio de Janeiro Carnival being the largest. Carnival takes place over 2 days, Sunday and August Bank Holiday Monday. Saturday sees the competition of the steel pan bands called Panorama. Each band can consist of as many as 80 members and are given 10 minutes to perform a piece of music which is usually an arrangement of a recent

"soca" hit song. Costume is a major part of carnival and work on these begin as soon as carnival ends, yes, an entire year of planning and preparation as well as hard work, long nights and sore fingers as thousands of sequins and feathers are married together to create large and small masterpieces. Carnival should be experienced in person at least once, do not be scared of the news reports you may have seen or heard, as the media often focusses on the very few negative aspects of carnival. If you are thinking of attending, my suggestion is to go on Sunday, arrive about midday, take in the sounds, the smells and the entire ambiance of unity, of the entire Caribbean islands all coming together to celebrate.

The roots of carnival began with the Windrush Generation, their children, grandchildren & many more generations after will continue to carry the flags of their countries as a shining torch and ensure they will never be forgotten.

THE 1968 OLYMPIC GAMES

Hannah (L6EME)

The 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City saw the iconic scene of Tommie Smith and John Carlos, each raising a fist in the Black Power salute as "The star-spangled banner" rang out through a stadium of over 83,000. The 200m medalists each wore a single black glove and went shoeless in black socks; this was a symbol that would not soon be forgotten. Whilst their statement came at great personal cost to both athletes, it became a crucial moment in the Civil Rights Movement.

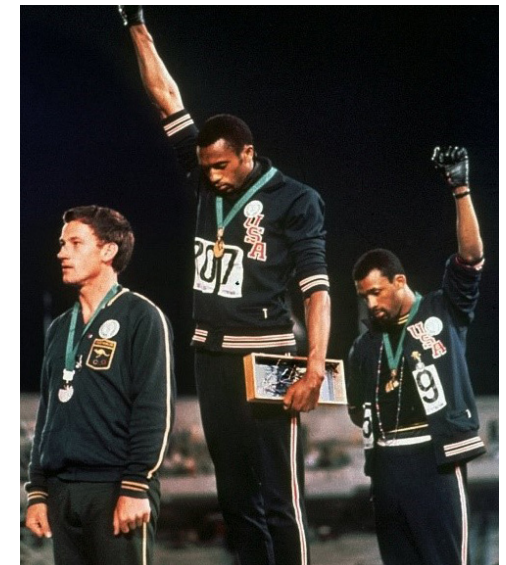
The 1960s was a period of great political strife in the USA. There were myriad events during this time and in the lead up to the Olympic Games that contributed to the instability of the period and caused tensions to rise, including the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy, and the Vietnam War protests. This period also saw the formation of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which with the contribution of Smith and Carlos, planned to use the Olympics as a stage to draw attention to the change that needed to be seen in the treatment of Black athletes, as well as Black people in America and around the world.

During their protest, the two athletes shared a pair of black gloves and went shoeless to highlight unity and poverty among the African American population of America. Peter Norman, the third man on the podium, was the silver medalist for Australia and wore an OPHR (Olympic Project for Human Rights) pin in solidarity with the movement. However, this display was not met with support. Within a matter of hours, the International Olympic Committee showed their condemnation for the actions of the athletes, and Smith and Carlos were banished from the US team as

well as the Olympic village, and sent back to America; Tommie Smith said, "Black America will understand what we did tonight".

Whilst Smith and Carlos upheld their actions and saw support from much of the African American population of the USA, their protest expedited the end of their professional careers. On returning to the US, they were vilified by the media, received death threats and were banned from competing nationally or internationally and later went on to coaching athletics. Yet their actions were enduring; Barack Obama said that "Their powerful silent protest [...] woke folks up", and in 2012, reflecting on his actions, Smith said that "The only regret was that it had to be done".

The display of the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympic Games was a defining point in the Civil Rights movement, and later became an iconic photo within sport. The actions of Smith and Carlos highlighted the inequality within US society and stressed the need for change at great personal cost.



FRED HAMPTON

Demir (L6HME)

Fredrick Allen Hampton Sr was an activist and member of the Black Panther party of which he eventually became deputy chairman. During his life 1948-1969, despite their new found rights, the Black community was unjustly oppressed with racism and still treated as secondary in the country to the Whites. They were under represented in politics and court leading to Hampton adopting Marxist views and prompting him to join the Black Panther party.

From as young as 10 years old Fred Hampton had a passion for equality, which he acted on by hosting breakfast meals for other kids in the neighbourhood. He led protests in high school opposing the exclusion of Black pupils in the competition for Homecoming Queen. The Black Panther Party was the perfect fit for him as it campaigned for equality through a revolution against capitalism and fascism in America in a plea for equal rights between all racial communities in America. His charismatic personality and clear passion and conviction (shown with quotes like "I believe I'm going to die doing the things I was born to do", "We're going to fight racism not with racism, but we're going to fight with solidarity", and "If you dare to struggle, you dare to win. If you dare not struggle, then damn it, you don't deserve to win") helped to quickly raise him to the top of the party to which he rallied support with his message of equitability and helped to create the party manifesto.

Despite being depicted as vicious and a chaos inducing mob by the media, he and his comrades continued their revolution and became a serious threat to white supremacy in the USA. His main achievements were to introduce free breakfast meals for the

African American community and founded the Rainbow Coalition which changed the focus of the fight from just racial equality to class equality as he allied with groups such as the Young Patriots (underprivileged whites) and the Young Lords (underprivileged Hispanics). This movement inspired the Black Lives Matter movement and reform in not only American society but for the whole globe.

Hampton suffered a violent death but his message and legacy has never been forgotten and he arguably helped create the much more equal society we live in today.



TRIX WORRELL: THE MAN WHO CHANGED BRITISH TELEVISION

Mr R Worrell

Trix Worrell (no relation), a game-changer in British television and film, was born in Saint Lucia in 1959 and moved to Britain as a child. He became one of the most influential Black writers and producers in UK media. Before Worrell's breakthrough, Black representation on British TV was limited and often stereotypical. Shows like "Love Thy Neighbour" (1972-1976) relied on racial stereotypes for laughs, while "The Fosters" (1976-1977) featured an all-Black cast but didn't achieve long-term success.

Worrell created "Desmond's," a groundbreaking sitcom that aired on Channel 4 from 1989 to 1994. It was the first British sitcom to feature a predominantly Black cast and focus on a Black family's everyday life. He described "Desmond's" as "a migrant story," reflecting his commitment to representing the experiences of immigrants in the UK. Unlike previous portrayals of Black people on British television, which often focused on problems, Worrell's work depicted the everyday lives of a hard-working immigrant family in an affectionate and comedic way. This approach allowed him to explore serious issues while maintaining a sense of humour, making the stories relatable to both Black and White audiences.

Why was "Desmond's" such a big deal?

- Representation Matters: Worrell put Black British life front and centre, moving away from stereotypes.
- Real Characters, Real Stories: Characters like Desmond, the shop owner dreaming of returning to Guyana, portrayed authentic experiences.

- Laughs for Everyone: By focusing on universal themes like family and community, "Desmond's" appealed to viewers of all backgrounds.

Worrell's influence is evident in shows like "Chewing Gum" (2015-2017), "Famalam" (2018-2020), and "I May Destroy You" (2020). These series feature well-rounded Black characters and stories that resonate with diverse audiences. Trix Worrell's achievements remind us that representation in media is crucial. His work paved the way for the diverse range of shows we enjoy today, proving that great storytelling knows no colour barrier.



POEM FOR THE MONTH:

GWENDOLYN BROOKS, 'WE REAL COOL'

Ms J Johnson

Shamefully few Britons would recognise Gwendolyn Brooks. And yet, she is one of the most influential twentieth-century American poets: the first Black poet ever to win a Pulitzer prize, as well as the first Black woman to be Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry at the largest library in the world, the Library of Congress in Washington.

I was reaching the end of my first term of A levels when Brooks died, and I heard a recording of 'We Real Cool' played by my English teacher. Brooks disliked the fact that this poem was her best-known and most frequently anthologised poem; she wished people would read further into her work, and avoid pigeon-holing her. But the poem still thrills me. Written in 1959, at the height of the Civil Rights movement, it focuses on a group of seven Black teenagers, hanging around outside a pool hall ('the Golden Shovel');

The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.
We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.

After the poem's cocksure opening, a two-fingered salute to education, the speakers go on to present themselves as rebellious, associated with the night and its lurking threats of violence. These are brash boys, who revel in the ambiguity of their language: are they

merely straight talking, or straight shooting, too? Brooks' conscious choice of non-Standard English captures the unruly nonchalance of the boys, their unwillingness to be bound by the strictures of education and poetic tradition, an historically white domain. Her positioning of the pronoun 'We' at the end of the lines works like a chant to reemphasise the togetherness of the boys, against the hostile and bigoted world around them.

As the poem goes on, however, the hubris gives way to creeping pathos. Like fireworks flaring and sparking before fizzling out, the speakers are aware that theirs is a brief candle, and for all the excitements of jazz, gin and sin, the poem comes to an abrupt and haunting end: 'We / Die soon'. Is it a criticism of the boys' lack of ambition? A condemnation of the system's failure to invest in these boys' futures? A cautionary tale about the dangers of life on the streets? An attempt to immortalise otherwise nameless and overlooked Black men? It is all of these, and more, which is why I come back to the poem again and again, twenty years after I first read it. And if you go, now, and look up the captivating audio recording of Brooks reading 'We Real Cool', I guarantee you will, too.



MAMADY SIDEBE MALI TO THE PREMIER LEAGUE

Mr J Lea

Mamady Sidebe was born in Mali and at an early age his family moved to France. His Father was a very strict disciplinarian and devout Muslim. Mama would play football at every opportunity, but his father was not a lover of the game and was against his son playing for the local teams as he would be coming home late from training and because the area was plagued by gangs and drug dealing, he didn't want his son dragged into that culture. Mama learnt quickly how to look after himself and his younger siblings.

Against his father's wishes Mama managed to play for the local youth teams, he also managed to get trials at lower league teams and was offered a contract at Massey Palaiseau where he played youth team football for a year. In this time a scout from Red Star 93 spotted him, and he signed for them and played two seasons before moving to La Paris Chareton. It was here that Swansea City were alerted to his talents, and he moved there. After one season he was signed by Tony Pulis for Gillingham. When Pulis moved to Stoke City he signed Mama and it was here that he had his best spell in football. Although he wasn't the most skilful, he made up for it with his great work ethic, and this and the fact that he played with a smile on his face, made him a firm favourite with the Stoke supporters. He also struck up a great partnership with the mercurial Ricardo Fuller.

During his time at Stoke he suffered a horrendous life-threatening injury while playing for his native Mali against Togo. The crowd rioted after the match and Mama was dragged through the dressing room window by the mob and he severed an artery in his arm on

the broken glass. Luckily the paramedics got to him quickly and then he was rushed to hospital. It was four months before he was able to play for Stoke again and Mama understandably, refused to play for Mali again.

Mama became even more of a favourite with the Stoke faithful when he scored a headed goal against Aston Villa from one of Rory Delap's famous long throws which proved to be the winner in what was Stoke's first win back in the Premier League after twenty-seven years in the lower divisions.

When Mama retired from football he opened a French patisserie in Stoke where his family had settled. He wasn't sure at first if the people of Stoke would take to his patisserie but it became a great success.

Sol Sidebe, Mama's son has been at the Stoke academy since the age of ten and recently became one of the youngest players ever to pull on the red and white stripes when he made his first team debut against West Brom at just 16 years of age. He also made his debut for England U17 at about the same time. Mama had been a great favourite while playing for Stoke, but also made a life for his family and himself in the Potteries after he retired from the game. I have met him and if other Malians are like him, may many more set up home in this country.

