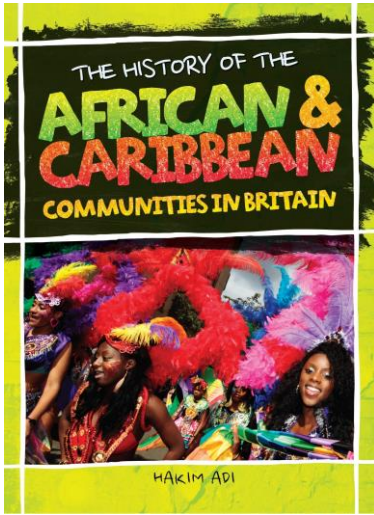


# The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

Professor Adi



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Discover the fascinating history of African and Caribbean communities in Britain, from pre-Roman times to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Newly updated, *The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain* explores why people came to Britain, the problems they faced and the contributions these communities have made to British society.

Brought to life with case studies and rarely published photographs, this is an opportunity to get up close to the experiences and vital impact African and Caribbean people have had in Britain. Meet pioneers such as Olaudah Equiano and Phyllis Wheatley and find out why African and Caribbean communities have been fundamental to Britain's success on the world stage.

Written by British historian and academic Dr Hakim Adi, a specialist on the history of Africa and the African diaspora, this book is essential reading for children aged 11+ and anyone interested in learning about the history of these communities in Britain.

- **LESSON 1: THE FIRST AFRICANS IN BRITAIN**
- **LESSON 2: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES: FIGHTING FOR CHANGE**
- **LESSON 3: AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES IN WARTIME BRITAIN**
- **LESSON 4: BLACK COMMUNITIES TODAY**

# The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

## LESSON 1: THE FIRST AFRICANS IN BRITAIN

Extract from p5

It is not yet clear when the first Africans arrived in Britain. Some of the first humans to reach Britain from what is today Spain, may have originally come from north Africa. Ancient folk tales tell of African people invading Britain thousands of years ago, even before the Roman conquest of AD 43. In these folk tales Africans were thought to be the builders of Stonehenge and other ancient stone circles. During Roman times African soldiers were stationed in Britain for many years. The Roman emperor Septimus Severus, who came from Libya, visited Britain and died in York in AD 211.

There are many other references to Africans and Black people in the early histories of Britain. Some tell of Africans invading Britain at the same time as the Angles and Saxons in the fifth century. In the Middle Ages, Africans were usually referred to as 'Blackamoors' or 'Moors', the name given to the north African conquerors of Spain from 711 to 1492.



*Septimus Severus and his family, third century AD.*

Extract from p6-7

By the late sixteenth century there may have been hundreds of Africans in England, especially in London, but there are also records of African men and women living in towns such as Barnstaple and Plymouth. English ships sailed as far as the kingdom of Benin in West Africa, and English merchants traded with a number of other West African kingdoms. In 1555, five Africans from what is now Ghana visited England to be trained as interpreters for London merchants. Some Africans were employed as servants and entertainers, and there were African musicians and dancers at the court of Elizabeth I. During her reign (1558–1603), England began to participate in the transatlantic slave trade. From 1570 onwards some enslaved Africans were brought to Britain as household servants.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

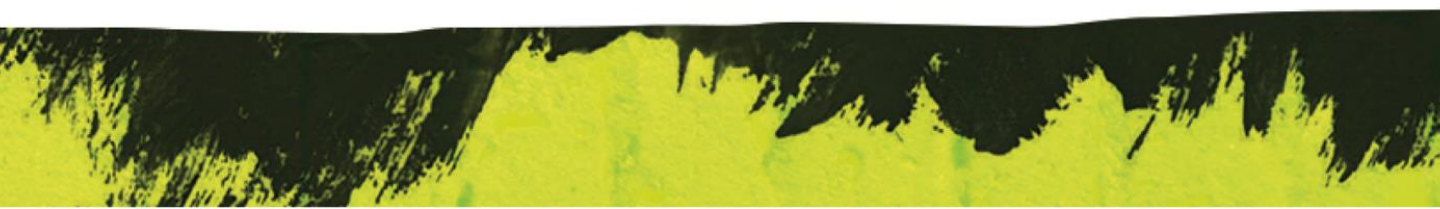
- What do you know already about the history of African and Caribbean communities in Britain?
- Is there anything in the extracts that surprises you? Why? Share your ideas.

## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

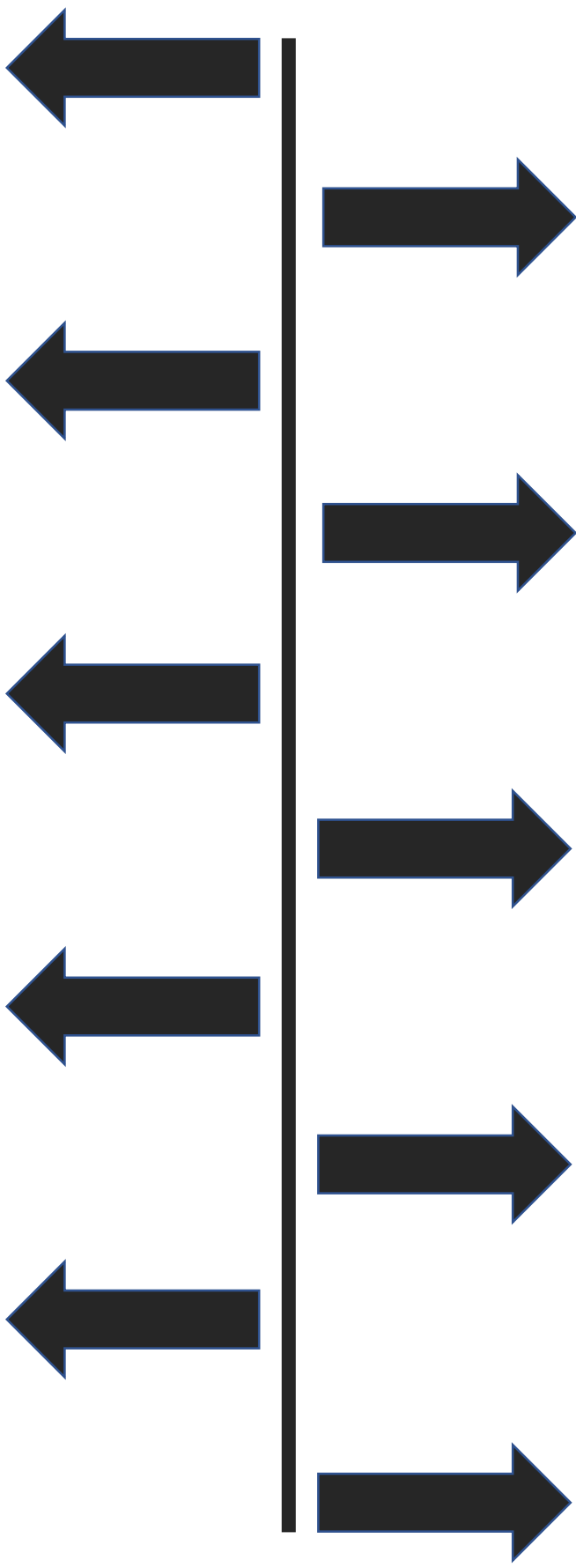
### LESSON 1: THE FIRST AFRICANS IN BRITAIN

#### ACTIVITY: BEGINNING MY BLACK HISTORY TIMELINE

- Start off by reading over the extracts again and highlighting or underlining key dates that are mentioned. Plot the first date on your timeline making a note of its significance in the history of African and Caribbean communities in Britain. At the end of the timeline, write the current year.
- Making sure you leave plenty of arrows for future lessons, add in another couple of important dates to your timeline. Once again, write down their importance and any key figures associated with these dates.
- Together, share the points on your timeline and discuss:
  - Why is it important to learn about the history of African and Caribbean communities?
  - How can educating ourselves and each other challenge prejudice and discrimination?
  - What have you learnt in today's lesson? How has this changed your views about Black history?
- Share what you have learnt today with someone at home. Perhaps this conversation will encourage them to think differently or to learn more about Black history in Britain. Keep your timeline safe as we will be using it again in each of the following lessons!



# MY BLACK HISTORY TIMELINE

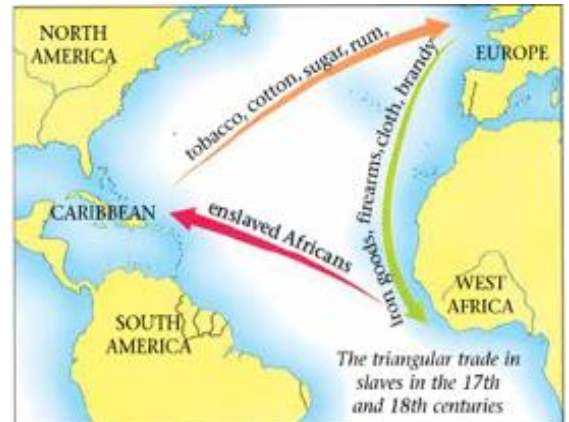


## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

### LESSON 2: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES: FIGHTING FOR CHANGE

Extract from p15

The main problem affecting most Black people in Britain during the eighteenth century was their status as slaves and the fact that the slave trade continued to grow, with Britain as the main slave trading country. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries African slaves in Britain were regarded by the law as property or goods to be sold, not as human beings. But at the same time English law did not allow human slavery. For a time it was thought that if Africans were baptized or married to English people this would free them from slavery. However, because the slave trade was so valuable to Britain's economy it continued, and Africans brought to Britain by their owners remained slaves.



Extract from p26

Most Black people were poor and lived amongst the working people in the towns and the countryside. In the nineteenth century workers often lived in terrible conditions, worked long hours and were poorly paid. It was difficult and sometimes illegal for them to form unions and to organize to change their conditions. Until 1918 most were not allowed to vote. Gradually workers did organize themselves to fight for better conditions and wages and for the right to vote. Black people in Britain also played their part in this important political movement. Two of the most famous were William Davidson and William Cuffay.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

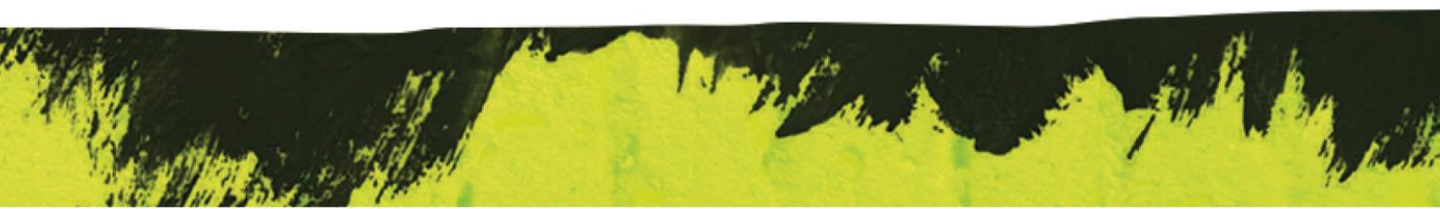
- Why did slavery exist for so long? What does the Triangular Trade image show?
- What other forms of oppression and discrimination did Black people face in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries?

## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

### LESSON 2: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES: FIGHTING FOR CHANGE

#### ACTIVITY: INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES

- Begin by getting into groups of 3 or 4 and discuss together: how many inspirational Black people have you learnt about from the 18th and 19th centuries? Why is it important to think of Black history as British history?
- Each group will then be given one of the Case Studies to research together. Highlight and annotate your Case Studies then mind map ideas for the following questions:
  - What are the key dates and events in this person's life?
  - What discrimination did they face?
  - How did they overcome adversity?
  - What makes them so inspirational?
- Feedback your Case Studies together as a class. Had you already heard about any of these inspirational people? If not, discuss the possible reasons why.
- Be sure to add some of the key dates from today's lesson to your timeline!



## Case Study One: Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (p11)

### **Ukawsaw Gronniosaw**

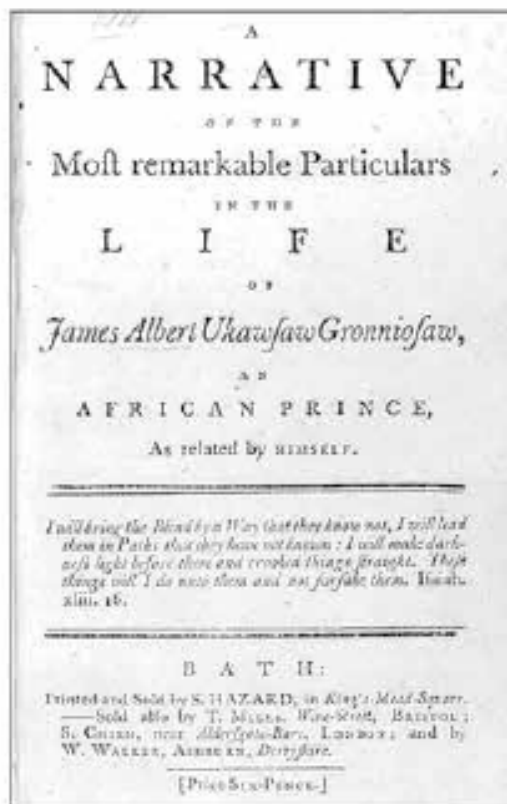
We know something of the difficulties faced by poor Africans from the autobiography of one of them, Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, which was first published in Bath in about 1770. Gronniosaw was born in about 1710 in what is today northern Nigeria. Although of royal birth he was kidnapped and sold as a slave for two metres of cloth when he was about fifteen. He was a slave in Barbados and America but gained his freedom when his owner died. He later joined the British Army and served in the Caribbean. When he was discharged in the 1760s he came to Britain.

In Britain Gronniosaw took the name James Albert. For a time he lived in London, and he married an English woman who was a weaver. Then the couple moved to Colchester, but both soon became unemployed. Gronniosaw then found work as a builder, but throughout their lives both he and his wife found it difficult to find work and lived in great poverty, constantly in debt.

The family often went without heating and food and at one time lived on four raw carrots for several days. His daughters became ill with smallpox and eventually one died from a fever.

The family were forced to pawn their clothes and sell everything they had to pay their debts and then moved on to Kidderminster.

Around 1770 Gronniosaw, with the help of a young woman from Leominster, published the story of his life – *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince*.



The title page of Gronniosaw's book.

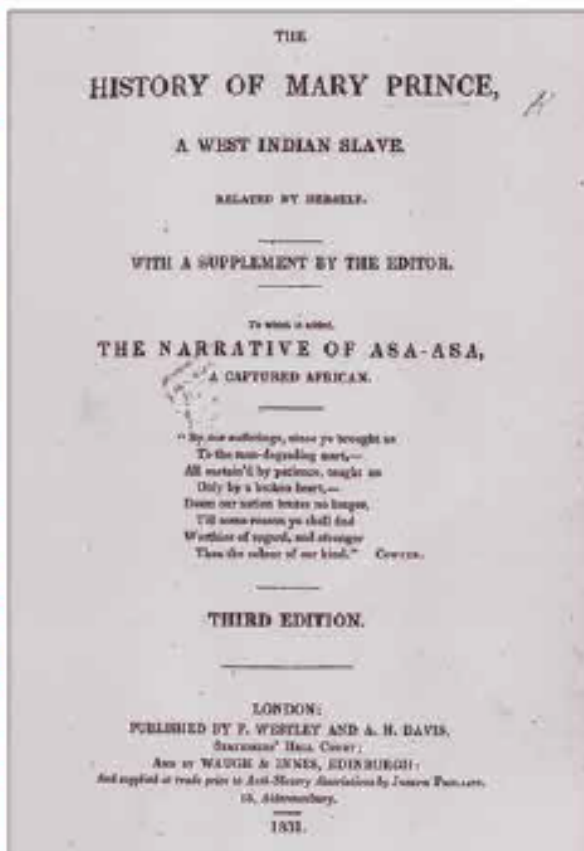
CASE  
study

Case Study Two: Mary Prince (p21)

**Mary Prince**

Although slave trading had been made illegal, slavery was still practised in Britain, as shown by the autobiography of Mary Prince. Mary was born a slave in Bermuda in about 1788. She worked as a servant, children's nurse and salt miner before being brought to Britain by her owners in 1828. Although she was married she was kept as a slave and suffered from continual torture. Once in London, she decided to run away and was helped by the Anti-Slavery Society. In 1831 *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* was published. This was the first book written against slavery by a Black woman in Britain and immediately became a bestseller. It played an important role in the campaign to abolish slavery. Finally in 1834, after many years of struggle in Britain and slave revolts in the Caribbean, Parliament declared slavery illegal throughout the British Empire.

**CASE  
study**



The cover of Mary Prince's book.



Case Study Three: Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (p28)

CASE  
study

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875. His mother was English and his father, a doctor, came from Sierra Leone in West Africa. Coleridge-Taylor was to become one of the most famous classical composers of his day, best known for the choral work *Hiawathas's Wedding Feast*, written in 1898.

He became a professor of composition at Trinity College of Music in London, and toured the USA, where he worked with African-American musicians and composers, and was invited to the White House. Coleridge-Taylor was proud of his African heritage and in many of his compositions used African songs and melodies. He was concerned about the problems facing Black people all over the world and helped to organize the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900. Tragically, Coleridge-Taylor died in 1912 at the age of thirty-seven.



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912).

Case Study Four: Mary Seacole (p29)

**Mary Seacole**

At present we have very little information on the lives of Black women in Britain in the nineteenth century. Some African and Caribbean women were sent to be educated in Britain, and some African-American women, such as Harriet Jacobs, left accounts of their visits to Britain. But we have few details of the women who were born and grew up as part of Britain's Black population.

The most famous Black woman in Britain in the nineteenth century was Mary Seacole, who was born in 1805 and grew up in Jamaica. Her father was Scottish and her mother Jamaican. She travelled at her own expense to the battlefields during the Crimean War (1853–6), and nursed sick and wounded British troops.

Mary Seacole was awarded four medals for her work, but has not become as famous as Florence Nightingale. In 1856 Mary Seacole returned to live in Britain and in 1857 published her autobiography, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*. She died in London in 1881.

CASE  
study



*The original cover of Mary Seacole's book.*

## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

### LESSON 3: AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITIES IN WARTIME BRITAIN

Extract from p17

By the early years of the twentieth century, Britain ruled colonies in the Caribbean as well as in many parts of Africa. Many more people from these areas came to Britain to study and find work and some then remained and settled. People from the Caribbean and Africa came to join the armed forces or the merchant navy and to work in Britain's war industries during the First World War (1914–18). Many people from the Black communities in Britain also enlisted in the services and in munitions work. Several thousand people were brought to Britain from Africa and the Caribbean to do war work, so that British men would be free for military service. By the end of the First World War there may have been about 30,000 Black people in the country.



*Troops from the Caribbean serving in France during the First World War, 1916.*

Extract from p42

Many of those from Africa and the Caribbean remained in Britain after the war. But just as after the First World War, those who had contributed to the war effort were not always welcomed. In 1948 in Liverpool there were attacks on the Black community. Many people were injured or arrested after the Seamen's Union tried to bar Black seamen from working in British ports.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

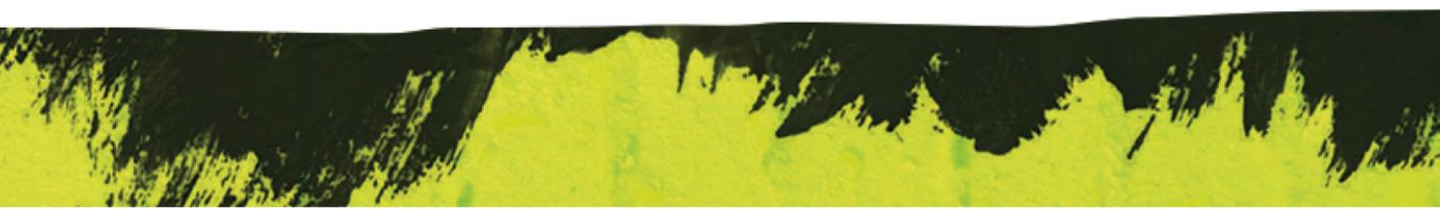
- What crucial role did African and Caribbean communities play during WW1 and WW2?
- Why were Black people treated so badly despite the sacrifices they made?

## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

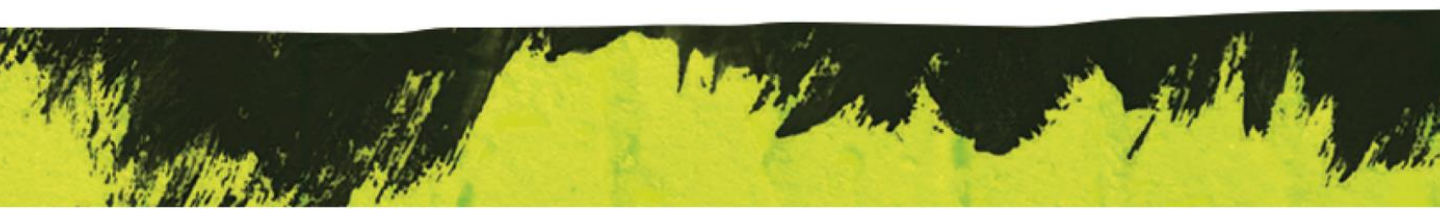
### LESSON 3: THE 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES: FIGHTING FOR CHANGE

#### ACTIVITY: KEY MOMENTS 'MIX AND MATCH'

- Throughout WW1 and WW2, African and Caribbean people continued to settle and form communities in Britain. Read over some key moments and movements throughout these important periods of British history.
- Cut out each of the boxes on the next page and try to match up the terms in bold with their definition or explanation. Check these over as a class and discuss the significance of each key moment, thinking about how this has shaped Britain today.
- When you are happy that your moments are matched up correctly, stick them down on your timeline. Your timeline should be looking jam-packed by now so you may need to add in some extra arrows of your own!



<p>This organisation was founded in 1931 and was concerned with uniting everyone of African and Caribbean origin, but also had White members.</p>	<p><b>THE 1919 RIOTS</b></p>
<p><b>IMMIGRATION</b></p>	<p><b>THE WAR EFFORT</b></p>
<p><b>THE LEAGUE OF COLOURED PEOPLES</b></p>	<p>During both WW1 and WW2 thousands of men and women from the Caribbean and parts of Africa volunteered and enlisted to help Britain's war effort. Many of these people sacrificed their lives.</p>
<p>During the late 1940s and 1950s the British government encouraged immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa and elsewhere to come and work in Britain.</p>	<p>Racism was on the rise after WW1 resulting in riots and racist attacks in east London, Glasgow, South Shields, Cardiff and other areas.</p>



## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

### LESSON 4: BLACK COMMUNITIES TODAY

Extract from p44



*Girls from a Nigerian church in London, stopping off for an ice cream.*

Since 1980 many more migrants have come to Britain from Africa, some as refugees from countries such as Somalia and Zimbabwe, as well as from other countries like Nigeria. Most of the country's Black population are now born and grow up in Britain, but may still retain their links with Africa and the Caribbean. In this way the culture of the Black communities and of Africa and the Caribbean have become part of British culture. Many people are now familiar with African and Caribbean food, such as yam and plaintain, and with cultural events such as Notting Hill and other carnivals. African music, sometimes called Afrobeats, has now become as popular amongst many young people. Today in Britain's main cities

it is often African and Caribbean churchgoers and churches who are giving new life to the country's Christian traditions.

In many areas of life from sport to politics Black people in Britain, despite many difficulties, are continuing to make their contributions. As this book has shown, people of African and Caribbean origin have been an important part of Britain's population for many centuries.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

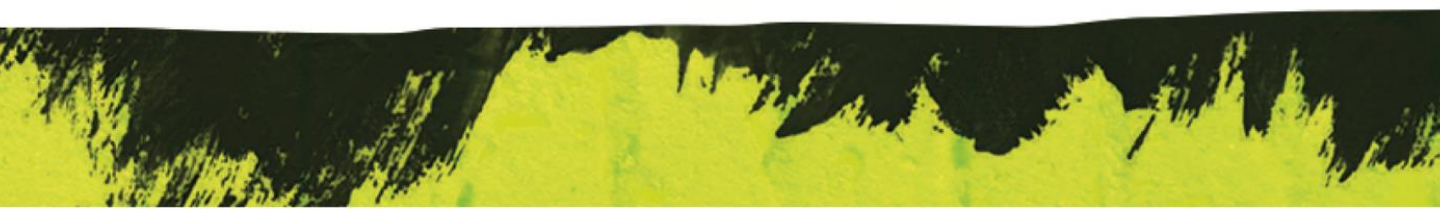
- What do you know about the history of Black communities where you live?
- How does the *Black Lives Matter* movement continue to fight for change and progress today?

## The History of African and Caribbean Communities in Britain

### LESSON 4: BLACK COMMUNITIES TODAY

#### ACTIVITY: BLACK HISTORY BOOKMARKS

- With a partner, talk about what you have learnt over the course of these 4 lessons. Think about how your research and discussions have given you insight into the history and ongoing struggle for equality in society.
- On each of your two Black History Bookmarks, write down something you have learnt about the history of African and Caribbean communities in Britain. You might like to include inspirational people, key moments and movements, facts and statistics, as well as illustrations.
- Use these bookmarks and keep them as a reminder of the contribution and sacrifices made by Black people across the world to make Britain the country it is today.
- Add in final details about more recent events to your timeline, then put them on display. When you get home, why not do some research into the history of Black communities where you live?



**BLACK HISTORY BOOKMARKS**

