

# Black History Month 2024



Doing good together



# What is Black History Month?

The origins of Black History Month lie in the US, where Carter G Woodson launched the first 'Black History Week' in 1926. Woodson's parents were former slaves and he aimed to promote, celebrate and recognise black history in schools. The event eventually expanded to a month long celebration in 1970.

The **UK's first Black History Month took place in 1987** – the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean.

**Akyaaba Addai-Sebo**, who came to the UK from Ghana as a refugee, wanted to challenge racism but also celebrate the history of Black people in the UK.

Black History Month UK takes place **every October**.

It represents a time to celebrate and educate everyone on the hugely diverse history and culture of Black Britons, whilst recognising past and current contributions to the UK's wider society, economy and heritage.



# Reclaiming Narratives

This year's theme is 'Reclaiming Narratives'. The aim of the theme is for Black Britons to become the storytellers and custodians of their heritage. For a long time, Black British history has been narrated by others and failed to capture the full depth of the experiences of Black Britons, leading to stereotypes and misrepresentation.

## Beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> Century...

The British Empire and the Windrush are pivotal aspects of the Black British experience, highlighting the waves of migration and contributions of Black people to the UK's rebuilding after WW2.

However, Black communities have existed in Britain for centuries, tracing back to Roman times and the Tudor period.

These histories are often overlooked and deserve greater awareness.



*John Blanke – The Life of a Black Tudor*

# Stephen Lawrence – A Legacy of Change

The racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 is seen a pivotal moment in UK race relations. Whilst his death was a deeply tragic event, it signified a turning point in British history.

## The ‘Macpherson’ report:

Following the public outcry and media attention towards Stephen’s death, the government began an inquiry. This revealed that the Met Police were institutionally racist and there were serious failings in the investigation of Stephen’s murder.

The report made 70 recommendations for reform across policing and law – as a result, the ‘Double Jeopardy’ law was overturned leading to the conviction of two of Stephen’s assailants (three remain free).

National Stephen Lawrence Day: 22<sup>nd</sup> April



*Baroness Doreen Lawrence discusses Stephen’s legacy and why racial inequalities persist in the UK, 25 years after the Macpherson report.*

# Reclaiming Narratives

Reclaiming Narratives offers an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Black people in the UK – whether it's the arts, sciences, politics or everyday life. Imagine how inspiring it is for younger generations to see people from their own communities succeed and to hear their stories from their own perspective, rather than someone else's.

Below, you can read/watch interviews featuring prominent Black British individuals in the Arts, Culture and Sports industries, discussing their careers and life experiences.

[Sir Mo Farah – Olympic Track Athlete](#)

[David Harewood – Actor/Presenter](#)

[Michaela Coel – Actress/Screenwriter](#)

[Denise Lewis – Olympic Heptathlete](#)

[Bolu Babalola – Author/Screenwriter](#)

[Sonia Boyce – Artist/Educator](#)



*Sir Lenny Henry & the 'Three Little Birds' cast discuss the importance of seeing Black stories on TV*

# Celebrating Black Britons...



**Walter Tull**

The British Army's first ever black infantry officer and one of England's first black footballers.

Walter played for Tottenham Hotspur and Northampton Town FC before enlisting in the British Army. He and lead a successful night raid into enemy territory. He was fatally wounded in March 1918. He was recommended for a Military Cross but his family are yet to receive it.



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**Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock**

A British Space Scientist and became the British Science Association's first Black president.

Dr Maggie worked in the aerospace industry, designing instruments and systems for space missions and now works in Science Communication and Education. She is an advocate for D&I, encouraging young people to consider careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)



**Paul Stephenson OBE**

UK Civil Rights Campaigner, that led the Bristol Bus Boycott in 1963, the UK's most successful black-led protest.

Paul led a successful boycott of the Bristol Omnibus Company, which refused to employ Black and Asian drivers. In 1964, he also protested the refusal of service based on skin colour. This led to the creation of the UK Race Relations Act, outlawing discrimination in public spaces.

# Reclaiming Narratives

There are a number of UK based charities and organisations that work to support Black communities and raise awareness for racial injustice.

To find out more, you can click the links below.

[Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation](#) – in honour of Stephen Lawrence, the foundation aims to push for a more inclusive society and create more opportunities for marginalised young people in the UK.

[Nilaari](#) – a black led charity, with a focus on providing mental health support, particularly to Black, Asian and minoritized adults in the UK.

[Race Equality Foundation](#) – a charity tackling racial inequality in public services.

[Show Racism the Red Card](#) – the UK's leading education charity focused on anti-racism

[Stopwatch](#) – an organisation focused on researching 'stop and search' outcomes and using their findings to prove the injustices and disproportional policing across England and Wales.