

Briefing Letter

Publication Working Title: Bristol & Slavery – past and present -- Facts, Myths, Feelings –

-- A Bristol Race Forum Project to mark the Abolition Anniversary --

'Silencing as well as remembering, identity is always a question of producing in the future an account of the past, that is to say it is always about narrative, the stories which cultures tell themselves about who they are and where they came from'

Stuart Hall: Myths of Caribbean Identity (2000)

Aims

This book will be designed to turn Bristol's slaving history inside out and use it to inspire, enlighten, celebrate, empower and uplift its readers. It will impart knowledge, raise awareness and foster understanding about the city's 'black' history and its people.

The resource is for the general public and could also be a learning resource for Key Stage 3 and above. The booklet we want to produce is a reflective one that gives voice to some of the African heritage community of Bristol – their memory, knowledge and awareness of the impact of slavery on their lives, whether in the past or its effect today.

Audience

The book itself will be an A5 paperback, around 40 full-colour pages with quality paper and finish. Its primary audience will be young people and educators to whom it will offer something accessible and engaging to help break down the subject and its themes. Part of the book will also direct readers to the increasing wealth of resources for further study of the themes.

It will have popular appeal with accessible language and creativity in the contributions and the visual imagery and design. A range of pithy personal stories, imaginative imagery and pointers to further references will make this book a key 'starter' for anyone interested in Bristol, its history and the cultures that inhabit the city.

Background

The Bristol Race Forum has been funded to carry out this project on slavery as part of the *Abolition of Slavery Bi-Centenary* celebrations. The project is to be participatory and educational.

Scope

This print publication will start with Bristol's slavery history and go on to give a taste of how it is felt today by the city's existing inhabitants and young people in particular. A select group of contributors will share their own viewpoints about the facts and the range of feelings; the extent to which they believe the history affects them and findings of their consultation with peers, friends, family or community groups.

The core idea will be about how this history and its legacy may affect the identity and wellbeing of African Caribbean people and their relationship to other cultures, the city and to themselves.

Content

The book will share the basics in terms of key information about Bristol and slavery, though it will also expand our ideas about this through the range of personal inflections on it and any 'new thinking' in the light of the 2007 Abolition commemoration.

The publication will draw on well-researched 'facts' about the impact of Bristol's African connections. It will present feelings about the legacy of slavery in the present day as a number of key strands of thought and strong opinions about this subject. The facts and feelings will coexist, interwoven as personal journeys from young people, educators, artists, and elders, amidst the pieces of steadily emerging evidence that has been gathered about the subject in recent times.

References & Resources

Being a relatively small publication with an emphasis on accessibility, there is a limit to how much information it can contain. It will therefore offer pointers to key texts, resources and further information to study the subject and its themes. Priority will be given to core texts, gateways to other content and their relevance to / availability in Bristol.

Additional (optional) content could include activities and approaches for using the content in a teaching / learning context such as a classroom.

Process

This content will be developed by working with a core group from who will go on guided personal journeys as researchers, writers and creative contributors to the book. They will engage in the concept based on their interest in writing, researching and exploring this subject, the will to learn, explore and make a creative contribution being far more important than knowledge of the subject. Lack of interest in the subject might also be a great starting point for some. The process will be an opportunity to learn and participate.

The following themes / keywords came forth from a project editorial ideas storm. They represent some of the areas at which a publication would aspire to reach. They may work their way into the publication through a range of devices.

Themes / Keywords

1. Race
2. Power
3. White
4. Identity
5. History
6. Black
7. Slavery
8. Heroes
9. Sheroes
10. Legacies
11. Resilience
11. Achievements

12. Understanding
13. Bristol
14. 2007
15. Profit & Loss
15. Debt
16. Guilt
18. Shame
19. Wellbeing

These themes will be subject to review by participants during the initial briefings and design development process.

The process from here

The core group will gather the facts and explore the myths, beliefs, ideas and feelings that this issue evokes.

If you would like to contribute to the project in some way, we will be able to talk to people in groups, or on a one to one. Or you may wish to submit a piece of writing or artwork, or introduce us to someone else who may wish to contribute something.

If you are part of a group we might be able to organise a group 'focussed conversation' with you, or we are happy to come to one of your events and talk to people who are interested in offering their experiences.

How to contact us

Kim Cavanagh has been contracted to coordinate contributions and consultations that will inform the material produced and meet the new deadline of October 09.

The project team are contactable as a first point by phone or email via
Kim: kimcavanagh@btinternet.com / 01984 623127/07929 972758

What does slavery mean to you?

5 Young people go on a journey through Bristol past and present to explore some of the common myths, uncover some of the deep feelings and examine how slavery impacts today.