

# STARLIGHT

**Starlight Black Child  
Mixed Heritage Group**  
  
December 2005

A newsletter for families, friends and professionals with a keen interest in issues related to black young people of mixed heritage.

## Season's Greetings!

Christmas time is upon us again and we are really looking forward to our party at The Priory and ? Pub on the 23rd December. JADA Pearl, a talented local singer, will be singing live from her debut album. Ja'Blinks from Studio 45 will be DJ'ing along with Neil from Atlantic Studio Sound System and DJ Lloyd Earl. It starts at 8pm til late and tickets are £6 if anyone would like to join us.

Since the last issue Sue, Glen, Rory and his girlfriend Sam, were invited onto the Jeremy Kyle Show, recorded in Manchester. A white mother had contacted the show for help with her two teenage black daughters of mixed heritage. It was shown on Tuesday, 6 December and we have included a review of the show in this issue.

We would like to remind people that Rory would welcome responses to the questionnaire included in the last issue of this newsletter. We have reprinted it again here so that more people have the opportunity to

complete it.

We are still looking into the possibility of hiring a local venue for the group to meet on a regular basis and organise some family events for 2006. We also need to pursue funding so that the group can be sustained long term without relying on goodwill and voluntary work.

Also included in this issue is an article concerning black British history from an archaeological perspective written by Richard Benjamin and an overview of Professor Chris Gaine's paper. Professor Gaine has been a regular member of the 'Does Colour Matter?' panel of speakers and has an interesting contribution to make to this debate as a white man living in rural England.

We always welcome contributions from our readers and would be pleased to hear from you. You can also advertise your services in the newsletter, the advertising rates are listed on page four.



**Who was this man?** He was the first black British army officer in the first world war but do you know his name or what else he was famous for? Have a guess but if you don't know look at page four to discover who he was and why we should not forget him. **HINT:** He was also talented in a particular sport.

We sell a children's book about his life on behalf of Letterbox Library. The title of the book is *Respect*, written by Michaela Morgan, suitable for readers aged 8 and over, price £4.99. Please contact us if you would like a copy.

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### Special points of interest:

- The Anti-Racist Paradox
- 'Does Colour Matter?' conferences
- Black British Archaeology
- The Jeremy Kyle Show

## 'Does Colour Matter?' Conferences

Sadly we had to postpone the conference in Liverpool due to a lack of participants. We are therefore re-scheduling the dates for 2006 so that we can include Liverpool in the remaining round of these conferences.

We are determined to continue to host this conference across the country as we feel that this debate is crucial to the development of an inclusive set of services that values the skills and talents of a diverse range of people. We feel this is most likely to help create opportuni-

ties for all children irregardless of their cultural heritage.

Despite all of the legislation and equal opportunity policies, we feel we have yet to create a genuinely culturally diverse, open and equal environment. By hosting this debate independent of any organisation, local authority or other institution, we feel we are most likely to give participants an opportunity to explore these issues in an honest, open environment, free of any pressures, real or imaginary, that may limit contri-

butions if linked more directly to their work environment.

Our aim is to write a report that outlines the issues raised and will include recommendations for a positive way forward once we have completed this series of one day conferences.

The report will be forwarded to all those who participated in the conference and can be used as a template to take forward this work in their specific location.

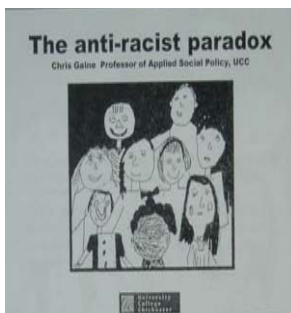
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**Next issue: March 2006**

## The Anti-Racist Paradox - "Anti-racist work in white areas" by Professor Chris Gain, Chair of Social Policy at University College, Chichester

Professor Gain begins his paper by referring back to the European empires as he believes that 'the living ghost of colonial images of the African still occupy our cultural landscape'.

He argues that for most of the last fifty years, when we've spoken of 'race' we've meant 'colour'; when we've referred to 'racism' we've meant 'colour racism' and when we talk of 'immigration' we've usually meant colour too. 'Colour' therefore remains a critical, distorting and dangerous signifier of difference and inequality, particularly, he argues, in 'white' areas.



Despite claims that Britain is multiracial the percentage of the population from visible minorities is between 8% and 9% nationally. However, this percentage is not evenly spread across the nation and there are many areas such as Chichester, Nor-

folk, Northumberland or even outer Birmingham, that do not encounter this proportion in the local population. The reality is that Britain's 'racial' diversity is mainly to be found in London and the industrial cities. Therefore Britain's diversity is both real and remote. 'Most schools are mainly white schools; most medical staff deal with white patients most of the time; most thieves are white.'

When Professor Gain is asked 'shouldn't we all be colour blind?' he replies, paradoxically, both no and yes. 'No', because 'race' matters in people's lives, and we need to acknowledge it in order that we can make it *not* matter. 'Yes', because he would like it to be irrelevant in social interaction and in people's life chances.

Professor Gain highlights that, for people who would describe themselves as 'black', their blackness is inevitably a signifier of a history, not just a colour. It represents a pride in their heritage, because it signifies survival, their family's and their own survival of centuries of domination in one form or another by white Europeans. Therefore, in this sense, to adopt a colour blind approach would mean to forget this history. This pride in being black, to some extent, tells the tale of survival against injustice and unfair treatment throughout the centuries.

Being proud of whiteness is not like that according to Professor Gain. He is not saying that white British people have nothing to be proud of, but, he believes that this pride in being white should not relate to the atrocities and exploitation carried out over the centuries nor to the whiteness involved in the scandal of Stephen Lawrence's murder investigation or other such examples. He says white people should not forget these things because part of their legacy is that colour still matters.

If white people claim that they don't notice someone's colour they are firstly self-deceiving but they are also denying something that is inevitably important to them. Also by denying their whiteness they are in effect denying the privileges they enjoy in their everyday lives.

Professor Gain explores the inequalities in educational attainment and the evidence of white pupils negative stereotypical perceptions of black people and the difficulty, uncertainty and embarrassment that are particularly evident in white areas in dealing with these issues.

Ethnicity, in theory at least, is a cultural term not a biological one but it has taken on some other meanings. In general, when white people use 'ethnic' they mean simple and primitive whilst denying

their own ethnicity: 'They are ethnic, we have no ethnicity, we are normal, they are different'. In effect, it is normalising whiteness

**"..we have to live with the paradox that to make 'race' matter less we have to pay attention to it more, and that its relationship to ethnicity is never going to be simple."**

and making anyone other than white 'the Other'. When this is related to the claim to colour blindness it reproduces racism while apparently denying it.

In conclusion, Professor Gain believes that we have to live with the paradox that to make 'race' matter less we have to pay attention to it more, and that its relationship to ethnicity is never going to be simple. He also acknowledges that keeping up with the 'shifting sands of 'race' and ethnicity' is also difficult - 'the period of predictable ethnicities is past'. Noting that it is even harder in white areas to keep up with this because they don't get the subtlety, 'we don't experience the complicated ways in which minorities' ethnicity is worn rather than put in a display case, and the way that it interacts with colour'.

## The Jeremy Kyle Show - Review by Glen Berley

On Tuesday, 6 December 2005, we appeared on the Jeremy Kyle show. We were asked to appear as a white mother had phoned the show for help as she is worried about her two teenage daughters of mixed heritage adopting an aggressive, gangster style attitude towards being black and she was scared for their safety. Apparently Jeremy Kyle wanted an expert to appear on the show with her and we were asked along!!

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The girls argued that they were black and that their mother was not on the same wavelength and couldn't understand. The family had suffered racist abuse when they lived in London and the girls had tried ignoring it, the police had also been involved, but the girls found that the only

thing that stopped the racist taunts and abuse was fighting back. They moved away from London but by then they had decided that they would deal with any racists by hitting back.

Both Sue and Rory addressed the girls and their mum during the debate and we hope that we were able to help them to see that this isn't the best way to deal with racism. Rory rightly pointed out that the girls were not changing the racist's attitudes by beating them up - they were still racist - but that they might end up endangering their own lives. Rory told the girls that he would just walk away as racists are idiots and even if they end up in hospital because the girls have fought back, they are still an idiot and the girls might lose their lives or their liberty.

We met the girls and their mum after the show and they were a lovely family. The girls came across as quite defensive on television but were actually very civil, polite

and very respectful. They took on board our different approach to combating racism and listened to what the group had to offer and we are keeping in touch. The group showed the girls that there are other ways and means of dealing with racism, which has no place in a modern society.

Jeremy Kyle recognised that this is a very important debate that needs to be addressed, and he has proposed that there should be a whole programme dedicated to this very important issue, we will have to wait and see if the response was enough for this proposal to go ahead. The Starlight Group would welcome this opportunity as it brings this important debate to the nation and emphasises why more black history should be taught in school, to the benefit of all pupils. This will help to dispel racism, challenging stereotypes and opinions, before racism becomes embedded in yet another generation who perpetuate racism.

## Black British Archaeology By Richard Benjamin, University of Liverpool

Richard is a Black British archaeologist who became interested in ar-



Richard Benjamin

chaeology at primary school and, despite initially being persuaded not to pursue a career in archaeology by his tutors at secondary school, has returned to focus on this subject. When he left school he enrolled, somewhat reluctantly, on a BA Urban Policy/Community and Race Relations course, but this turned out to be a fortunate move. The course looked at the theoretical approaches to the concept of race, ethnicity and culture and examined the social and political implications of ethnic diversity in modern Britain. As part of the Race Relations component of the degree they had a one-hour a week lecture on African history taken by a Ghanaian scholar called Dr. Isaac Mensah. He was greatly influenced by the work of African centred scholars, such as Molefi Kete Asante, who oppose the notion of Europe as the teacher and Africa as the pupil. But it was not only the history of Africa that was covered but of the entire African Diaspora.

Richard was twenty years old and it was the first time he had heard anything about Africa other than colonialism, the slave trade or apartheid. Instead they learnt about the kingdoms of Axum, Mali and Songhay, great African leaders and of the many African American inventors.

In 1997 Richard began to study for an MA in Archaeology. But it was not due to a childhood interest or even a career path; it was more important than that. "To understand my own identity I realized that there was a void in British archaeology and heritage that needed to be filled. I knew that if I wanted to know more about the heritage of Black people in this country I would have to do it myself." Richard has recently completed a PhD at the University of Liverpool titled, "Black Identity and Social Inclusion through Archaeology and Heritage." His research proposed how a 'utilitarian archaeology', that is, an archaeology of Black Britain, can be beneficial for the Black community in several ways. It would not only lead to a greater understanding of Black identity but it would increase social inclusion for the Black community - academically, professionally and socially (Benjamin, 2004).

On many Black British lifestyle and history websites, mention is often made to a unit of North African Moors, stationed at the Roman military garrison at Burgh-by-Sands at the western end of Hadrian's Wall in Cumbria. In fact, Emperor Septimus Severus circa. 208 AD, a North African, is held in such high regard by members of the Black British community that he has recently been included on a list of the greatest one hundred Black Britons for a recent poll. Burgh-by-Sands could lead British archaeology into one of the most contested areas of contemporary archaeological thought, that of

the existence of "Africanisms". The debate centres on the premise that Africans in the New World and beyond did not leave all their traditions and cultures behind and that through domestic items, religious ceremonies, music, and oral histories we can see direct relations with past and present African cultures (Holloway, 1991). Burgh-by-Sands would not only enhance its claim to be the primary Black British archaeological site, but it would offer those academics that are involved in the debate on Africanisms in the United States a European perspective. The site would immediately be transformed into a project that would attract international interest. The information that presently exists on Africans in Roman Britain needs to be collated and then placed together so that we can see the true extent of an African presence in British antiquity. One only has to look at the 2000 English Heritage Report on attitudes to heritage to realize that a Burgh-by-Sands is sorely needed. In 2000 English Heritage commissioned MORI to carry out research, on the attitudes that were held towards the concept of heritage by members of the general public. There were some 1,870 White, seventy-one Asian and forty-four Black members of the public that participated. The respondents believed that there were two main roles that heritage played: to preserve the past and to educate the children, the latter being chosen as "Very important" by 81 per cent. The survey showed that most Blacks felt alienated from British heritage. One Black female made a very strong point when asked if she wanted to preserve buildings, sites and artefacts, "That is the white man's", she replied. (English Heri

tage, 2000).

Richard feels the way archaeology and heritage is taught and presented has enormous ramifications for Black communities and British society as a whole. Burgh-by-Sands might well have been consigned to be a distant outcrop of the Roman Empire but it is of great importance in an archaeology that is both relevant and useful to members of the Black British community. Burgh-by-Sands rubbishes the viewpoint that the Atlantic Slave Trade or the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush from the Caribbean in the 1950s, are the beginnings of a Black presence in Britain. The site has a legacy that not only assists Black Britons in having an interest in the archaeology and heritage of Britain, but in reshaping their very identity.

**British archaeology and heritage has an opportunity to truly show that Britain, since antiquity, has been a diverse, multiethnic and multicultural nation. Something that needs to be remembered more than ever in contemporary Britain.**

Burgh-by-Sands has the potential to be a revolutionary archaeological site, which could herald in a new era of Black British heritage. British archaeology and heritage has an opportunity to truly show that Britain, since antiquity, has been a diverse, multiethnic and multicultural nation. Something that needs to be remembered more than ever in contemporary Britain.

## JADA Pearl - A talented young singer from Oxford

A review written by Glen Berley

JADA Pearl attended stage school from the age of 6 studying tap, jazz, singing and acting. At 10 she won a prize to perform on MTV which led to becoming a member of a dance troop in Disney Land USA. JADA has also performed leads in The Oxford Playhouse including Sleeping Beauty and Aladdin.

At 13 she released her first demo. She was soon signed to a London management company who gave her professional singing lessons with a reputable gospel singer. Many successful auditions followed. She has also recently performed at The Truck Fest 2005 singing backing vocals for a number of bands.

Jada is singing her debut album at the Starlight Christmas Party 23<sup>rd</sup> December along with Studio 45, DJ Lloyd Earl, Atlantic Studio Sound System, London. JADA vocal talent does not reflect her youthfulness, she has got to be one of the most talented singer's I have had the pleasure to listen to in recent years.

JADA first performed live at the Starlight Summer Breeze Boat Cruise in August 2005. Her performance was flawless, we all had that tingle you get when you hear a quality singer. JADA believes that it is too easy to fail, but if you believe in yourself and stay focused anything is possible in life.

There is also a special thanks to Studio 45's mastery for finding a worthy singer who should hit it big - watch this space!!!





### The Questionnaire

We would welcome receiving more completed questionnaires from readers participating in Rory's survey.

1. How old are you?
2. Do you have any hobbies? If so what are they?
3. What is your occupation?
4. Do you have any mixed race colleagues? If so how many?
5. Were you born in Britain?
6. Where are your mother and father from?
7. Do you feel British?
8. What term do you prefer to use for your ethnic origin?
9. What is in your opinion the most offensive term?
10. Do you feel people in general react differently towards you because of your race? If so could you give an example?
11. What ethnic group are the majority of your friends part of?
12. What do you feel is the most prejudice ethnic group in general? Why?
13. Have you ever been arrested?
14. Have you ever felt that the police treated you differently because of your race? If so please give an example?

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 8 April 2006

**FAMILY FUN DAY**

4pm onwards

Caribbean Cuisine

Fun Activities Music

Saturday, 27 May 2006

**"Summer Breeze"**

**BOAT TRIP & PARTY**

6pm til late

Studio 45's Ja'Blinks  
at the Helm

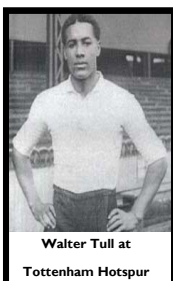
Caribbean Cuisine

### Did you guess?

The photo is of Walter Tull, born in Folkestone in April 1888.

Walter's father, arrived from Barbados in 1876 and married a girl from Folkestone. Over the next few years the couple had six children. In 1895, when Walter was seven, his mother died. Walter's father remarried but died two years later. The stepmother was unable to cope with all six children and Walter and his brother Edward were sent to a Methodist run orphanage in Bethnal Green, London.

After finishing his schooling Tull served an apprenticeship as a printer. Walter was a keen footballer and played for a local team in Clapton. In 1908 Walter's talents were discovered by a scout from Tottenham Hotspur and the club decided to sign this promising young footballer. Walter was only the second black man to play professional football in Britain. The first was Arthur Wharton, the



Preston North End goalkeeper. Walter played for Tottenham until 1910 when he was transferred for a large fee to Northampton Town. Other clubs wanted to sign Walter and in 1914 Glasgow Rangers began negotiations with Northampton Town. However, before he could play for them war was declared.

On the outbreak of the First World War. Tull immediately abandoned his career and offered his services to the British Army. Walter, like many professional players, joined the 1st Football Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. The Army soon recognised Tull's leadership qualities and he was quickly promoted to the rank of sergeant. In July 1916, Tull took part in the major Somme offensive. Tull had impressed his senior officers who recommended he should be considered for further promotion. He went to the officer training school at Gales in Scotland. Despite military regulations forbidding "any negro or person of colour" being an officer, Tull received his commission in May, 1917.

Lieutenant Walter Tull was sent to the Italian front. This was an his-

toric occasion because Tull was the first ever black officer in the British Army. He led his men at the Battle of Piave and was mentioned in dispatches for his "gallantry and coolness" under fire.

Tull stayed in Italy until 1918 when he was transferred to France to take part in the attempt to break through the German lines on the Western Front. On 25th March, 1918, 2nd Lieutenant Tull was ordered to lead his men on an attack on the German trenches at Favreuil. Soon after entering No Mans Land Tull was hit by a German bullet. Tull was such a popular officer that several of his men made valiant efforts under heavy fire from German machine guns to bring him back to the British trenches. These efforts were in vain as Tull had died soon after being hit. Tull's body was never found.

Walter Tull was clearly a great man and we should remember his valuable contribution to both the 1st World War and to football.

Information taken from:  
[www.spartacus.schoolint.co.uk/](http://www.spartacus.schoolint.co.uk/)  
BlackPeople.com

### Subscribe to this newsletter

The cost of subscribing to this newsletter is £20 for four issues. They will be produced in December, March, June and September. Please send us a cheque, made payable to Starlight BCMHG. If you need to be invoiced please let us know and we will arrange to send it to you.

### Send us your views or articles

We welcome contributions from our readers and look forward to receiving your contribution. We hope that this newsletter will provide a forum for promoting positive relations and encouraging an open debate with the aim of improving race relations in Britain today. The deadline for the next issue is 28 February 2006.

### Advertise in this Newsletter

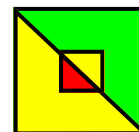
Let us know about your events, services and situations vacant. Our rates are very reasonable.

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1/8 page: £25



Please contact us with details. The deadline for the March newsletter is 28 February 2005.