

# Black British Civil Rights; Revealing the Hidden Story

Bringing Black British history to life through creative approaches to archival material

The first event of this 2015 Being Human Festival project began with two questions: 'Have you heard of the Mangrove Nine before?' and 'Have you heard of Martin Luther King?' The project was a collaboration between The National Archives and the Black Cultural Archives to unite material from government and community archive collections and explore the story of the Mangrove Nine and of the Black British civil rights movement in the 1960s and 70s.

Two workshops were held for 18-25 year olds using original documents to spark conversation, reflection and debate around the themes of protest, civil rights and racism. A spoken word workshop was led by poet and musician Roger Robinson and participants were encouraged to write their own responses to the material they had seen.

A few months later the project team hosted some of the key figures in the British Black Power movement of the 1970s, including the leader of the British Black Panther movement, one of the original Mangrove Nine, and family members of the owner of the Mangrove restaurant. For the first time they were able to see the police and government files kept about themselves and other individuals involved in the case and the movement, and to share their own memories with the project team.

The project team have contributed to online teaching resources on The National Archives website about the Mangrove Nine protest for secondary school age children and young people, drawing on the images and documents as well as some of the approaches used in the initial workshops at the Being Human event.

In 2020 the project team began working with Stillpoint Spaces, a community of psychotherapists, and poetry therapist Charmaine Pollard to develop 'Racism Past and Present', a programme of in person and online workshops telling the story of the black community in Britain across the twentieth century. The workshops explicitly allow space to unpack trauma and process emotional responses to the archive material presented and are being used as a case study going forward to develop therapeutic practice in archives.



## People:

- [Victoria Iglkowski-Broad](#), Principal Records Specialist – Diverse Histories, The National Archives
- Rowena Hillel, former Education Officer at The National Archives
- Iqbal Singh, Regional Community Partnerships Manager, The National Archives

## Institution:

- [The National Archives](#)

## Partners:

- [Black Cultural Archives](#)
- [Roger Robinson](#)
- [Stillpoint Spaces](#)
- [Charmaine Pollard](#)

## Area:

- London

## Being Human Festival year:

- Cities and Citizens, 2015

## Learn more:

- ['Let's Talk About the Mangrove Nine' blog](#)
- [Mangrove Nine Protest Resources](#)
- ['Racism Past and Present' mixing with therapeutic practice' blog](#)