

SHS BME Events and Activities Small Grants Scheme Report to Funders

12 February 2024

Jenni Hyde, Secretary of the Social History Society

A. Overview

The BME Events and Activities Small Grants Scheme was set up in 2019 in recognition of the under-representation, structural inequalities and racism afflicting UK Higher Education Institutions. Following common usage, by 'BME' we are referring to non-White people who are descended, through one or both parents, from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia (the Middle-East to the Pacific Islands), Australasia or Latin America. In its first four years, the scheme made 25 grants to BME historians or for BME history projects. We are announcing a further 6 grants in February 2024.

The scheme is administered by the Social History Society in partnership with seven other learned societies. These are currently: Economic History Society, Royal Historical Society, History of Education Society (UK), History UK, History Workshop Journal, Society for the Study of Labour History and Women's History Network.

The scheme began offering grants of up to £750, and this was increased to £1000 in 2020. In recognition of the disruption cause by the pandemic, and the disproportionate impact that this has been shown to have on BAME communities, in 2020 we expanded the remit of the BME Events and Activities Small Grants to include *directly incurred* research costs. This means that the grants can be used to contribute towards the costs of consumables, travel and subsistence, equipment purchase, and similar immediate costs of conducting research. The grant cannot be used to cover *directly allocated* costs, such as estates, researchers' time, facilities, or the use of existing equipment. The grant is also not to subsidise course fees. By supporting the directly incurred research costs of BME historians and research into BME history, the grants will be better placed to provide responsive and targeted support for this vital scholarship to continue in difficult times.

In early 2024, we made the decision to change the dating of the round from a calendar year to an academic year. It has not changed the process in any material way, but merely reflects the fact that the funding scheme closes at the beginning of December, decisions are made in January and the report is circulated to the partners with the invoices around February. The single calendar year was confusing in periods of handover within the Society, whereas the new academic year nomenclature is clearer.

2023-24 Allocations

The 2023-24 round (which closed 1 December 2023) was adjudicated by a panel consisting of Michael Joseph (University of Cambridge), Miranda Lowe (Natural History Museum) and Jonathan Saha (University of Durham). Applicants were notified of success or otherwise in

February 2024.

There were 14 applications, and the panel made 5 full and 1 partial awards. The panel noted that

This year we had fourteen applications, so roughly the same number as previous years, but there was a marked improvement in the quality of the applications—it was a really competitive year. We ranked the applicants based on how well they fitted the remit of the scheme to support histories of, or by people from, BME communities in the UK. We then took into account the contribution to economic and social history, the fit of the applicant to the project, the dissemination plans, and the budgeting. As with previous rounds, the funding has been granted to a range of applicants – from PhD students, to established academics, as well as community historians and heritage organisations. It seemed to the panel that the fund has now established itself as place to support research into marginalised communities.

B. Details of the 2023-24 distribution

Full grants:

1. Francesca Humi, Padayon: A oral history of Filipino migration to the UK (£1000):

My project, "Padayon", is an oral history project through which I will be conducting and recording interviews with Filipino migrants in the UK as part of a project to build an archive of oral history of migration from the Philippines to the UK since WWII. "Padayon" means to continue or to persevere in Cebuano, one of the main languages spoken in the Philippines, and is a term frequently used in Filipino activist circles both at home and abroad to encourage others in their struggle for social justice.

This oral history interviewing process will contribute towards the research for my book on this history, which will trace an account of why Filipinos migrate to the UK, what kind of labour - both paid and unpaid - they provide, what their lives look like in the UK, and what these patterns of migration say about race, gender, class, and work in post-Empire Britain.

The funding from this grant will be used to:

- develop the scope and framework of the project,
- undertake 10-15 interviews with Filipino migrants, mostly in London,
- cover the costs of interpretation, translation, and transcription,
- cover research and project costs, including printing, equipment, and the purchase of books
- pay for additional consultancy, including speaking to oral history practitioners and academics to help shape the project
- cover the costs of a public engagement event about the project

This project aims to fill the gap in literature and public knowledge about Filipinos in the UK - a community that has gained increased visibility following the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of which was devastating on the community, and news coverage and writing on Filipino domestic workers that has come to dominate the narrative of Filipino migration in the UK. The economic, social, and political context of this migration to UK has remained

invisible - with this project, I hope to make this context and the stories of my community members visible.

2. Sue Lemos (University of Warwick, PhD Student) *Pioneers of Our Own Future!': Historicising the 'Black Lesbian and Gay Movement' in Britain, 1960s-1990s* (£998.15):

The aim of this research trip to the Glasgow Women's Library is to study the documents of the virtually unstudied Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group (CLCBLG) for my PhD. The Camden Lesbian Centre project was founded in 1982 and, with the Black Lesbian Group (1984), secured England's first lesbian centre. The majority of the materials for my PhD project on the political activism and community organising of queer and trans Black people and people of colour in Britain, 1960s - 1990s, are not digitised. My research budget from the Economic and Social Research Council cannot cover the Glasgow trip due to the costs of oral history fieldwork and archive trips to London, where most of the materials for my PhD are held. Most of the centre's materials are held in Glasgow, therefore, funding for this trip is business critical. The material will greatly inform my oral history interviews. The CLCBLG and London Black Lesbian and Gay Centre were the only two publicly funded centres that explicitly centred queer Black people and people of colour in Britain. It is, therefore, imperative that a history of the 'politically' Black Lesbian and Gay Movement in 1980s and 1990s Britain - wherein queer and trans Black people and people of colour were constituent actors - includes the CLCBLG. I will have access to 43 boxes of material to highlight the CLCBLG as an integral space of the Black Lesbian and Gay Movement and write a comparative analysis with the BLGC.

3. Cherish Imunnakwe, (MA Student, Liverpool Hope University) *Liverpool Goes Bananas: Elder Dempster and the imperial fruit trade, c.1880-1900* (£751):

Liverpool's strategic maritime position shaped Britain's imperial trade history. This research will explore the city's trade connections by focusing on the arrival of the banana into Liverpool as a case study. The banana has a significant place in Liverpool's self-identity and was featured in the ubiquitous 'superlambananas', which were installed around the city in 1998, and then again in 2008 when it was the capital of culture. The fruit were first introduced to Britain through the port of Liverpool in the 19th century by the Elder Dempster Company, led by Sir Alfred Lewis Jones. This project aims to use archival records available in the Liverpool Central Library, the archives of the Greenwich Maritime Museum: London School of Economics Library Archives and Special Collections, and the National Archives Kew, to establish the links between the arrival of the banana in Liverpool, imperial trade, and Caribbean history. It will draw upon new imperial history methodologies to help facilitate a deeper understanding of the connections between the colonies and the British medical and agricultural sectors. It will also draw upon new social and cultural methodologies in the history of food that pays particular attention to the human relationship with food, and its moral, political, economic, and cultural value. For example, Diana Garvin whose research examines the way in which food is produced and purchased reveals that food was intertwined with politics in the daily lives of individuals. Similarly, Claude Fischler states that food can have cultural significance as it was both symbolic and mythical. Hence, this research will therefore seek to facilitate a deeper understanding of the role of imperial trade in shaping the British diet. Despite its undeniable influence, the banana's origins have often been overlooked or

underappreciated in existing historiography. Through an examination of Alfred Jones' role in the banana industry, the research will contribute to historical literature that recognizes British ports as cosmopolitan centers of cultural exchange and economic prosperity. Today, the banana is prominent on British breakfast tables, a testament to the enduring legacy of Liverpool's maritime trade connections. This research will therefore illuminate the city's pivotal role in the banana trade and underscore the profound cultural and economic interdependencies between Britain, Africa, and the Caribbean.

4. Leslie James (Queen Mary University of London, Sr Lecturer in Global History) History Summer School: Building to Postgraduate Study (£1000):

The QMUL School of History Summer School will work with a cohort of second year undergraduate students to demystify and encourage participation in postgraduate History. It is a key pillar within a wider strategic set of activities we are calling our 'Pipeline Project.' The overall aim of the project is to work from our undergraduate cohort to build the next generation of scholars with BME backgrounds. Based on our undergraduate BME attainment and on several years of feedback and conversation with our School's student representatives, we aim to target students in their second year to set the building blocks: a) positive outcomes in their final year modules and dissertation, and b) social and cultural awareness of postgraduate options in good time to build applications.

The specific aims and activities of the summer school are to:

- Demystify graduate study with sessions on how programmes work, what expectations are, how they can be funded.
- Inspire intellectual curiosity with talks from UK Professors and our QM Global Professors of BME background
- Prepare them for their dissertation with advanced sessions on how to prepare their projects.
- Orient students to archives with a one-day archival visit
- Equip them with tools to explain postgraduate study to family and home support base, where our students have often said they face challenges speaking to family with no reference points for this path
- Welcome their home support base with a closing reception

5. Lily Crowther (Curator (History), Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum) Built with malice aforethought': Leamington Spa & the Black Atlantic (£1000):

Funding is requested for a collection of essays aiming to demonstrate that Black history and histories of colonialism are relevant to all aspects of British local history, beyond the familiar stories of major port cities. The book is aimed at inspiring students, community historians and museum professionals to incorporate these stories into their work. Topics will include: the archival traces of Leamington Spa's plantation owners; reflections of slavery in the 18th-century country house; working-class support for the Confederacy in Sheffield; reframing central African taxidermy collections in Scarborough in collaboration with Congolese communities; a community history project exploring links between Welsh woollen textiles and the Caribbean; and oral histories of post-Windrush communities in Northamptonshire. The publication will accompany an exhibition exploring the historical connections between Leamington and the Caribbean, north America and West Africa.

Developed collaboratively with a community advisory panel, the key themes of the exhibition include: the origins of local wealth in the transatlantic slave trade and sugar plantations; Leamington's links to the Confederacy; and the town's popularity as a retirement destination for the military, the colonial civil service, and missionaries. It will reflect particularly on the history of investment in the Royal Pump Rooms, where Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum (LSAG&M) is now based, and will discuss the origins of the museum's West African collections. In the long term, the project aims to lay foundations for a deeper ongoing institutional engagement with these histories, which will feed into future permanent displays and public programmes.

Partial Grants:

1. Akosua Paries-Osei (Royal Holloway, University of London, Post-Graduate Research Student) Puberty: The Law of Biological Difference (£250.85):

I am a 2nd year PGR at Royal Holloway my PhD project is called 'Pernicious Philanthropy: The legal and medical fetishisation of black female childhood'. My project seeks to expose the relationship between racial science and the construction of racialised child sexual protection laws in Britain and colonial Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana). I need to visit the United Nations archives to research the White Slave Trade and Anti-Prostitution Committee's reports. These reports use racial science to underscore and institutionalise racialised puberty, which legitimised Western government's two-tiered age of consent legislation.

The British never enacted age of consent legislation in the Gold Coast; instead, they created and used rape laws to define girlhood and womanhood. The age of rape was set at thirteen in the Gold Coast. Under this age a female was considered a girl; at thirteen and above a girl was legally considered a woman and able to engage in prostitution legally. Prostitution in all forms was illegal in Britain, but it was permitted in the Gold Coast. The response of British administration who submitted data on sex-crime, child-marriage and prostitution in the Gold Coast was shaped by their belief in the racialised constructs of African childhood, which have their roots in pro-slavery discourses. This attitude was echoed by other Western member states.

My aim will be to research files from these two committees, to get a fuller picture of the depths of racial science in British and global child sexual maturity laws. The information collected will be used in a chapter of my PhD. I would like to turn this research into a paper.

D. Full list of awards made since inception of the scheme

Including links to relevant blogs and outputs

December 2019

1. Clare Burgess and Olivia White (UG - University of York) 'From Margins to Centre?' An undergraduate conference *Report receivedc [From Margins to Centre? An Undergraduate conference on marginalised histories – The Social History Society](#)*

2. Danika Parikh (Museum Detox) and Akshyeta Suryanarayan (University of Cambridge) 'Represent' a workshop at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge [Danika Parikh - 'The RePresent Project: Community Curation and Colonial Museum Collections' | Cambridge Heritage Research Centre](#) *Report received*
3. AfroCROWD UK '1919 – Black Lives in Britain' a series of Wikipedia hackathons at the Black Cultural Archives - *Report not received*
4. Lisa Robinson 'Legacy Makers' a knowledge exchange symposium – *Report never received*
5. Kesewa John (University of Chichester) and Karen Wilkes (Birmingham City University) 'Sapphire @ 60: Filming Race, Gender and Sexuality in 1950s Britain' a series of film screenings – *Report received*

December 2020

1. JC Niala (Horniman Museum & Gardens, Acting Keeper of Anthropology), Afro Historyscapes (£893.23) – *Report received, see write up here [Afro Historyscapes Podcast – The Social History Society](#)*
2. Rohin Alexander (UG student, University of York) Margins To Centre undergraduate conference 2021 (£400) *NB Owing to administrative errors at York and this money was not spent, but was reallocated to support the 2022 conference. Report received on this.*
3. Dr Shirin Hirsch (Historian at Manchester Metropolitan University and People's History Museum), Public Disorder in the Archive: Rebellion in 1981 Thatcher's Britain (£400) *NB: This project has been delayed because of maternity leave. Report chased and expected early 2022.*
4. Kay Stephens (on behalf of Remember and Resist project led by daikon* collective), Uncovering Histories of Migration and Resistance: Dover 58 and Morecambe Bay (£950) *NB this project was not carried out owing to partnership working issues, and in 2021 the panel agreed the grant could instead be used for 'Queer / Trans ESEA Oral History Project' – Report chased*

5. Dr Rosie Knight (Lecturer in American History, University of Sheffield), Walking in Our Stories: Sheffield African-Caribbean History Walking Tour (£739) – *Dr Knight has been on sick leave and has been extended until end of 2022 – report expected 2023*
6. Marral Shamshiri-Fard (PhD candidate, LSE), Visual Politics and Protest in the Middle East: Third World Liberation, Transnational Solidarity, and the Global Sixties, 1967–1976 (£250) – *Report received*

December 2021

1. Rachel Tough (PhD student, UEA) (£991.3) ‘Curating memory: politics and the past in the An Viet archive’ *NB – Project delivery delayed and now expected in 2023*
2. Shahenda Suliman (£1000) ‘Sudan Prison Exhibition: Memories of Kober’ Report received and bog post here [Sudan Prison Exhibition: Memories of Kober – The Social History Society](#)
3. Michael Lord Five ASide Theatre CIC (£1000) ‘Dorothee in the 20th Century’ Report requested
4. Hoyee Tse (University of Hong Kong/UCL) (£1000) ‘MIRPUR: A co-created VR experience’ Report requested
5. Rebecca Eversley (£1000) ‘Historic Dock Project’ Report received June 2022
6. Kwaku (BTWSC/African Histories Revisited) (£825) ‘Repairing Histories 1’ Report requested
7. Jamie Banks and Jessica White (£550.35) ‘History from the Attic’ *Project delayed and relocated to Liverpool, Project delivery delayed and now expected in 2023*
8. Breanna McDaniel (PhD student, University of Cambridge) (£550.35) ‘Vanguard Panel Sponsorship for Researchers Exploring Inclusive Youth Literature 2022’ Report requested

2022 Round

1. Gaynor Legall, The Heritage & Cultural Exchange, Butetown Community Centre: ‘Tiger Bay - Then and Now’ [£901] *Report requested but not received*
2. Paul Cooper, Director of Birmingham People's History Archive: ‘Commemorating Avtar Jouhl: BPHA Collection’ [£1000] *Report received:*

This October marked one year since the death of Avtar Jouhl, a prolific anti-racism campaigner and highly regarded General Secretary and National Organiser of the Indian Workers Association (GB).

The Birmingham People’s History Archive, in conjunction with the Social History Society and [BRiG](#) collaborated on a celebratory event which featured a video presentation, talks from BPHA Director Katherine Cremer and BRiG Director Jag Johal on the life of Avtar Jouhl, with plenty of audience participation. The event brought together academics, activists, historians and researchers,

many of whom were excited to discover the archive and learn more about the history of Avtar and the IWA. The meeting also displayed a number of new information boards showcasing important aspects of the history of Avtar, the IWA(GB) and the collection held here at the BPHA.

Our Director and a founder of the BPHA Katherine Cremer spoke about the culture of the IWA(GB) in the 1980's and early 1990's, about the central role of Avtar and his friendship with her family. Katherine was joined by Jag Johal, Avtar's son and today a leading campaigner in Birmingham against racism and discrimination, remembering Avtar and the important work undertaken by the IWA(GB). From the 1960s up until his death, Avtar Jouhl ensured that the IWA was at the forefront of anti-racism campaigns as they continued to challenge trade union members, factory owners, and publicans. It was this campaign that attracted the US civil-rights leader, Malcolm X to Smethwick, bringing much needed attention to the struggle. This undoubtedly aided in the eventual outlawing of the colour bar in the town's pubs in the Race Relations Act of 1965, paving the way for Britons of Indian heritage to become publicans themselves. Avtar Jouhl is considered one of the giants of the IWA and in the words of his son, Jagwant Jouhl, "in honouring his legacy we need to progress matters going forward and build on those legacies that our forefathers achieved". A full recording of the event is being prepared and will be made available on our website and youtube, visit www.bpha.online. The BPHA wishes to formally thank the Social History Society for all its support in making this event happen.

3. Dr Saima Nasar, University of Bristol, Lecturer in the History of Africa and its Diaspora: 'Conference: New Directions in Black Studies' [£990] *Report received:*

The aim of this conference was to bring together researchers to reflect on 'New Directions in the Black Humanities'. It sought to showcase the exciting research that is being carried out by a dynamic, interdisciplinary group of early career researchers. In doing so, one of the key ambitions of the conference was to support community building. As the feedback below suggests, these objectives were achieved.

This was an in-person conference, hosted at the University of Bristol by the Centre for Black Humanities. Thanks to generous funding from The Social History Society's BME Small Grants Scheme and the University of Bristol's Faculty of Arts Fund, we were able to offer travel bursaries for nine conference delegates who joined us from Royal Holloway, the University of Oxford, the University of West London, the University of Bristol, QMUL, the University of Birmingham, SOAS, and the University of Leicester. Altogether, 35 people were present for the day workshop, and 100 people signed up for the keynote.

We began the conference with an introductory talk by Dr Amber Lascelles (RHUL), who reflected on how it might be possible to create a critical mass of Black Humanities scholars in Britain. Lascelles posed the questions: how do we work with and expand the often US-centric scholarship in Black Studies? And how do we network and build, both as practice and method? In so doing, Lascelles stressed the need for community building and mentorship.

Our first panel on 'Literatures' started with University of Bristol MA Black Humanities student, Kennedy Marie Crowder. Crowder's paper ('Fabulation, Physics and Racial Horror: The Non-local Unreality of Black Literature') probed what 'reality' to a Black person is. She explored how speculative fiction by Black authors represents racialised geographies. Her paper was followed by Andrea Bullard (MA History, University of Bristol) who presented on romance representation in media and Black historical fiction. The panel concluded with Tony Jackson's (MA Black Humanities, University of Bristol) paper on 'The Thin Line Between Love and Obsession'.

Our second panel was on the theme 'Black Lives and Activism'. Sascha-DaCosta Hinds (doctoral researcher, University of Oxford) chaired the session. Wasuk Godwin Sule-Pearce (doctoral researcher, University of West London) started the panel with a comparative study of 'quadruple consciousness'. Sule-Pearce examined the transatlantic experiences of Black LGBTQ+ students in Higher Education institutes in the UK, US and South Africa. Caine Tayo-Lewin Turner (doctoral researcher, University of Oxford) followed with an illuminating paper on Black anarchism and the 'anarcho turn' of Black British protest and thought. He argued that the Black rebellions of the 1980s was the logical conclusion of over a decade of dissident norms established by Black radicals. Dr Melsia Tomlin-Kräfte (Lecturer in Qualitative Research, University of Bristol) then presented her research on migrations of British colonial Caribbean people.

The first afternoon session focused on 'African Studies'. We had four brilliant papers by Celine Henry (doctoral researcher, University of Birmingham), Henry Brefo (doctoral researcher, University of Bristol), Danny Thompson (doctoral researcher, University of Chichester) and Helina Shebeshe (doctoral researcher, SOAS). The papers covered histories of Asantehene Prempeh I, educational scholarships and development bureaucracy in Ghana, and Ethiopian migrants in the United Kingdom and their understanding and experiences of belonging. The panel was chaired by Dr Saima Nasar (Lecturer in African History, University of Bristol).

Our final panel on 'Fashioning Selves' was chaired by Ross Goodman-Brown (doctoral researcher, University of Bristol). The panellists included: Natasha Henry (doctoral researcher, University of Leicester), Claudia Jones (MA Black Humanities student, University of Bristol) and Olivia Wyatt (doctoral researcher, QMUL). Each paper examined race and racialisation. Wyatt, for instance, interrogated the ambivalent attitudes towards Black mixed-heritage children between the 1920s and the early 1950s.

We were hugely honoured to then be joined by our keynote speaker: author, feminist and academic researcher, Lola Olufemi. Olufemi's paper 'Only the Promise of Liberation' examined the purpose, utility and function of the imagination in the work of anti-racist and feminist grassroots political mobilisations in the UK.

Feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive:

'New Directions brought together some of the most talented emerging scholars working in Black Humanities in Britain. I thought the quality of the research on offer and the generosity of the questions and discussion made for a very warm and supportive environment. For some it was their first time giving a paper in person, and many shared with me that the collegiality in the room made this a much less daunting experience. The event made me excited and hopeful for the future of Black Humanities.' Dr Amber Lascelles (RHUL).

'The conference was a fantastic opportunity to bring together different voices — from around the world — working within the field of Black humanities. Not only did it provide us with refreshingly alternative concepts and methodologies, the conference also functioned as a safe space for upcoming researchers from ethnically-marginalised backgrounds navigating workplaces that are overwhelmingly White. The love, care and support that emerged within these sessions fill me with hope and excitement for the future of Black humanities in Britain.' Olivia Wyatt (QMUL)

'New Directions provided an encouraging and welcoming space, bringing together a diverse set of researchers united by the concern for the future of black studies. The range of focus and disciplinary methods (without the pretence of uniform expertise) made participation both rewarding and generative. Distinct ideological undercurrents did not serve to divide but rather inform a dialogue on the political dimensions of black humanities as a discourse; I gained clarity on my position as well as

the field in general. I look forward to the Centre's future events and conferences.' Caine Tayo Lewin-Turner (University of Oxford).

'I thoroughly enjoyed New Directions in Black Humanities at Bristol. As an Africanist it is often difficult to see how my work falls into conversations on black humanities, however the breadth of research made me feel at ease while at the programme. I heard many amazing discussions as well as questions and contributions which I will be exploring in my methodology for my own research. The key thing I am taking away from the programme is the rich network of researchers that I met and hope to keep in touch with throughout my research career. I hope this programme is organised again next year.' Celine Henry (University of Birmingham).

Many thanks to everyone who participated in and supported the conference!

The BME Grant funding was used for travel bursaries for the delegates. We were able to get additional funding from the university to cover extra costs.

4. Mohammed Khan, Manchester Metropolitan University, PhD candidate and Research Assistant for the Manchester Centre for Public History and Heritage: 'Muhammad Meets Manchester: Documenting Mancunian Experiences of Meeting Muhammad Ali' [£732] *Report requested*
5. Dr Amanda Zhang, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Modern Languages, University of St Andrews: 'Sissyphobia: Past and Present in China, 1911 – 2022' [£500] *Report requested but email bounced.*
6. Dr Nicole Gipson, Journal of American Studies, 'Welfare Hotels: Race, Gender, and Family Homelessness (1970 – 1990) [£500] *Report received:*

I used the funding for archival research into Union Settlement Records.: "Union Settlement's concern for the basic needs of the community, such as education, housing, and unemployment, is documented in the records of such services as the College Readiness Program, Skills Training Center, and the East Harlem Project. It also tried to serve the cultural needs, as is demonstrated by the annual reports, budgets, publicity statements, and memos of the Music School (est. 1957), administered by Union Settlement under the direction of Blake Hobbes."

I used the resources from this collection to write:

"Dependency Talk: Needs Discourse and The Public Housing Crisis in New York City" following my participation at the University of Edinburgh's GENDER.EDs Academic Writing for the Public Workshop in October 2023, to be republished in 2024 on the Race, Roots, and Resistance website.

For Chapter One entitled "Invisible Woman" of my manuscript: Welfare Hotels: Race, Gender, and Family Homelessness (1970 – 1990).

The entire 500£ was spent on the document copying fees at the University of Minnesota's Archival Collection: Union Settlement Records.