

B:M

DIG DEEPER, LOOK CLOSER, THINK BIGGER

KEY MOMENTS IN BLACK BRITISH HISTORY

HIGHLIGHTING OUR HIDDEN HISTORY

All too often, recognition of the Black community within our shared history is lost. Are you aware of these modern day change-makers and the barriers they've broken?

blackhistorymonth.org.uk



1833

Slavery outlawed

Britain passed an act officially outlawing the institution of slavery. In the space of just 26 years, the British government outlawed the slave trade that Britain had created and went on to abolish the practice of slavery throughout the colonies.

1881

Mary Seacole death

Mary Seacole's reputation after the Crimean War (1853-1856) rivalled Florence Nightingale's. She got herself out to the war by her own efforts and at her own expense and risked her life to bring comfort to the wounded and dying soldiers.



1913

John Archer first black mayor

John Archer became Britain's first black mayor of Battersea. He was also the first black person to hold civic office in Britain as councillor, alderman and then mayor.

1917

Walter Tull dies

Walter Tull dies as the Battle of the Somme he is recommended a military cross for his bravery.

1948

Windrush arrives

The Empire windrush arrives in Tilbury Dock, carrying 492 first generation post-war Caribbean settlers to Britain. Most onboard only intended to stay in England for five years but many stayed.

1958

First black newspaper

Claudia Jones (born in Trinidad) founded the first major black post-war newspaper "The West Indian Gazette". Claudia was also a political activist and community leader. The Gazette was crucial in her fight for equal opportunities.

1959

First "Notting Hill" Carnival

The first carnival was actually not held in Notting Hill. It was small, indoor showcase for Caribbean talent held in St Pancras Town Hall that was organised by the West Indian Gazette editor Claudia Jones.

1961

VS Naipaul

VS Naipaul wins the Somerset Maugham Award for his novel about growing up in the West Indies. Born in Trinidad in 1932 of Indian heritage, he moved to England in 1950. In 2001 VS Naipaul is awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature.

1965

Cy Grant plays Othello

Cy Grant stars as Othello at Leicester's Phoenix Theatre. He was one of the first black presenters on TV and in the late 50s he sang calypso versions of the news on BBC Tonight!

1968

First black head teacher

Dr. Beryl Gilroy became London's first black headmaster at Beckford Primary in West Hampstead. She later became a successful novelist, writing stories for and about her students, believing in literature that could "heal".



1968

Clyde Best signs to West Ham

Clyde Best signs for West Ham United. The Bermudan plays 186 games and scores 47 goals in 7 seasons. He was a role model for many black youngsters during the 70s.

1971

New Immigration Bill

Britain's home secretary Reginald Maudling announces that Commonwealth citizens lose their automatic right to remain in the UK under the government's new Immigration Bill.

1973

First black news reporter

Trevor McDonald joins ITN as a reporter from the BBC World Service and becomes Britain's first black TV news reporter. Trevor rose through the ranks and joined the News at Ten. He received an OBE in 1992 and a knighthood in 1999.



1975

Lenny Henry's TV debut

Lenny Henry makes his television debut winning the New Faces talent competition by doing stand-up comedy and impersonations. Lenny is now one of Britain's best-known comedians.



1981

First black woman newsreader

Moira Stuart has presented almost every news programme on the BBC, including News After Noon and the Nine O' Clock News. In 1994 Moira was named Best Female Television Personality by the Black Journalists' Association.

1982

The Voice published

Val McCalla started the weekly newspaper The Voice. The newspaper went on to become the mouthpiece of Britain's black community

1985

Broadwater Farm riots

Riots broke out in the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham, triggered by the death of Cynthia Jarrett. She collapsed after four policemen burst into her home on a raid. PC Blakelock was murdered during the riot.

1988

Naomi Campbell

At age 18 Naomi Campbell became the first black female to grace the cover of French Vogue. It helped catapult her to supermodel status.



1987

UK's first black MPs

Bernie Grant and Diane Abbott both won seats for Labour in the '87 General Election. Grant made his mark by wearing a traditional Ghanaian robe. Diane Abbott was active in many political areas. She's still MP for Hackney North & Stoke Newington.

1989

First director of education

Gus John becomes Britain's first black director of education of a local authority - London Borough of Hackney.

1991

Bill Morris

Bill Morris is elected the first black leader of a British trade union; Morris takes up the post of General Secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union.

1992

Linford Christie Olympic gold

Linford Christie the sought after 100m gold medal at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona.



1993

Stephen Lawrence

A-Level student Stephen Lawrence is murdered by a group of white men while waiting for a bus in Eltham, South-East London. Failure to capture his killers provoked his parents to begin a campaign to shame the authorities. No one has been convicted.

1993

First black England captain

Paul Ince becomes the first black Captain of the England football team. He captained the squad for a total of seven games. Sol Campbell is the other black player who was captain.

1996

Black Britain first screened

TV programme Black Britain is screened on the BBC. It reflects the lives and experiences of the UK's black population and is billed as the BBC's first programme specifically for black viewers.

1996

The MOBOs launch

The Music of Black Origin Awards was televised on Channel 4 to emphasize the achievements of black music and artists. In the first year Goldie won two, The Fugees won two and Jazze B received one for Outstanding Contribution to black music.

1998

Justin Fashanu dies

Footballer Justin Fashanu dies. The elder brother of John, he was one of the first British sportsmen to be openly gay. In the '80s he was the first black player transferred for £1m, yet after coming out, his career fell apart.

1999

Lawrence Report

After a long campaign by Doreen & Neville Lawrence, a report by Sir William Macpherson is published. It looks at the police handling of Stephen's murder and contains a withering attack on racist attitudes within the Metropolitan Police force.

2001

Mike Fuller

Deputy Assistant Commissioner is the 4th highest rank in the Metropolitan Police. Fuller said: "The perception of the glass ceiling is finally being broken." He was then made the first black Chief Constable in 2004.



2003

Baroness Valerie Amos

Valerie Amos became the first black leader of the House of Lords.



2004

Linda Dobbs

Linda Dobbs becomes the first black QC to be appointed as a judge for the British High Courts of Justice.

2004

Holmes wins 2 Olympic Gold's

Kelly became the nation's sweetheart when she won the 800m & 1500m at the Olympics in Athens. After the Olympics 40,000 people lined the streets of her home town of Tonbridge for a parade. She was also made Dame Kelly.



2013

Doreen Lawrence

British Jamaican campaigner and the mother of Stephen Lawrence, who was murdered in a racist attack in South East London in 1993, created a Life Peer in 2013. In January 2016, she was unveiled as the new Chancellor of De Montfort University.



2017

Record of BAME MPs

The general election of 1987 saw the "Famous Four" of BAME MPs; Diane Abbott, Bernie Grant, Keith Vaz and Paul Boateng elected into Parliament. Fast forward 30 years and the 2017 General Election results has seen a new record of 52 BAME MPs elected. DEMOCRACY IN ACTION!

2019

Baron Woolley of Woodford

Widely acclaimed as one of the most influential people in the UK, Simon Woolley, Founder and Director of Operation Black Vote and Advisory Chair of the UK Government's Race Disparity Unit was given a knighthood for his services to race equality.