

Suggestions for future commemoration

Several excellent suggestions were received in response to the public consultation. Table 1 lists the suggestions that have been shortlisted by the Review Panel along with some of the history of the individual or group put together by the Review Panel. This list is intended as a starting point to inspire future research and along with the recommendation for a Task Force to be established to develop a community project to find a way to celebrate and tell the story of those individuals or groups listed, the Panel recommend that other community groups, schools and individuals find their own way of telling the stories of those listed.

Some of the suggestions received were to celebrate people with no connection to the Stroud district, and although great suggestions, they have been separated into Table 2 as these suggestions will not form part of the scope of the community project developed by the Task Force.

Table 1: Review Panel Shortlist

Black History and Black people of Stroud (pre-Windrush)
<p>The parish records of Stroud's St. Laurence Church have only three entries from before the twentieth century for Black people:</p> <p>On the 28th February 1786, a man called Adam John Parker was buried aged 32 with a parish funeral, an indication of poverty; an unnamed man aged "about 40 yrs" was buried on the 24th Mary 1800 and likely had a similar burial; and a child called William Ellis, the son of a "Negro of Guinea" called Qualquay Assedew, was baptised aged 12 on the 7th May 1801, under the name of the vicar that conducted the ceremony.</p> <p>There are also parish records for Black people living elsewhere in the Stroud district around this time.</p> <p>There are two baptisms: Francis London, "a servant to the Rt. Hon. Lord Ducie supposed to be 17 years of age – a native of Africa" was baptised on the 20th June 1773 in Nympsfield; and William Frocester, "supposed to be about 11 or 12 yrs old, born on the island of Barbados and now a servant of Edward Bigland Esq. residing in Jamaica" was baptised in Frocester on the 4th November 1790.</p> <p>There are also four burials: Daniel "a black stranger" was buried in Nympsfield on the 31st of December 1719; William Jubiter "black" was buried in Rodborough on the 1st July 1778; Thomas Davis, "an infirm travelling Black" was buried aged 67 in Minchinhampton on the 29th June 1826; and Ann Johnston, "a woman of colour" was buried aged 35 in Eastington on the 29th February 1876.</p> <p>These parish records were maintained by local churches and as such only contain records for ceremonies conducted by those establishments. This means that potentially there could have been other Black residents of the area who could have gone undocumented by these records. More information about historical parish records for people of colour throughout the whole of Gloucestershire can be found at: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2101416/a-handlist-to-resources-relating-to-bame-people-and-communities-in-gloucestershire-updated-2020.pdf</p>
Anti-Slavery Arch, Anti-Slavery Campaigners, Slavery Memorial
<p>The Anti-Slavery Arch in Stroud is Britain's oldest anti-slavery memorial, built by Henry Wyatt in 1834 to celebrate the passing of the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833. It was originally built by Wyatt in Paganhill as part of the entrance to his private estate; his property was demolished in the 1930s but only the arch remains now. The monument is now a Grade II* listed building owned by Stroud District Council, and also serves as the namesake for nearby Archway School. More information about the wider history of the arch can be found in a short publication written by Philip Walmsley and published by the Stroud Local History Society in 2003 called 'Stroud Versus Slavery' available online here: https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XVzctalk</p> <p>The Review Panel agree the Anti-Slavery Arch is an important part of the district's history and forms part of their recommendations. Now is an opportune time to provide information not only</p>

on the role the district played in the abolitionist movement but also the role of the district in the Transatlantic slave trade, imperialism and colonialism.

Windrush

The Windrush generation were workers who came to the UK from the Caribbean between 1948 and 1971. Many arrived on the HMT Empire Windrush ship.

On the 22 June 1948, the first big group of post-war migrants from the Caribbean arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex on the Empire Windrush ship. 22 June now marks National Windrush day, a day to recognise the contribution of migrants to UK society.

Windrush Day was launched in June 2018 in the wake of the Windrush Scandal, to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the pioneering Windrush Generation in the UK.

Further information can be found via the following links:

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/the-windrush/windrush-then-and-now-a-day-to-celebrate-how-the-windrush-generation-helped-to-create-the-black-british-society-we-know-today/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-funds-windrush-day-2022-celebrations#:~:text=Community%20projects%20celebrating%20the%20Windrush,June%20through%20events%20and%20activities>

In March 2020, an independent *Windrush Lessons Learned Review* was conducted and provided an assessment of the events leading up to the Windrush scandal and key lessons for the Home Office.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876336/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_LoResFinal.pdf

Undoubtedly, the Stroud district will have greatly benefitted from migration and the area is better for it but more research needs to be done to present the legacy of the Windrush generation and the contributions they made and continue to make.

Sheffie Mohammed MBE (1925-2011)

Born and educated in Trinidad, Sheffie Mohammed MBE served as an Independent Councillor for Farmhill and Paganhill ward on Stroud District Council for 33 years from 1973 to 2007.

The Stroud News and Journal published the following information:

“Regarded as the grandfather of Stroud District Council... The restorations of both Stroud’s Arch commemorating the abolition of slavery and the bandstand in Stratford Park are among the achievements for which Mr Mohammed is especially proud...”

“Born in Port-of-Spain in Trinidad and trained as a jeweller and watchmaker. Served in the RAF during the Second World War and moved to Stroud in the early 1950s. Received his MBE in 2006 for services to the community in Gloucestershire”

More information can be found here:

<https://www.stroudnewsandjournal.co.uk/news/1400284.sheffie-mohammed-steps-down/>
<https://www.stroudnewsandjournal.co.uk/news/9259529.sdcs-longest-serving-councillor-sheffie-dies-aged-86/>

A tree was planted in Stratford Park in 2012 in memory of Sheffie Mohammed and the survey responses suggested the renaming of Stratford Park Bandstand as this was one of his achievements as a Councillor.

Thomas Burchell (1799-1846)

Thomas Burchell was born in Tetbury and was an anti-slavery campaigner who went to the Baptist Church in Nailsworth before establishing a number of Christian churches and setting up ‘free villages’ in Jamaica.

More information can be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Burchell

Stroud Area Mill Workers

This is a broad subject and although much is written about the Stroud textile industry there seems to be relatively little about the workers and more research is needed.

Some information can be found here: <https://www.stroudtextiletrust.org.uk/history-background-to-local-wool-industry>

Margaret Hills (1882-1967)
Margaret Hills was a British teacher, suffragist organiser, feminist and socialist. She was the first female councillor on Stroud District Council where she is credited with driving through housing improvements and later served as a Councillor on Gloucestershire County Council.
There is a street in Stroud called Margaret Hills Place.
Chartists
Chartism was a national political movement with the aim to gain the vote for the working class together with further reforms that would establish democracy. Its heyday was between 1838 and 1848. A mass meeting of 5,000 people was held on Selsley Hill in May 1839 in support of Chartism after a similar (but smaller) meeting was held on Rodborough Common at Easter 1839. http://selsleycommunitygroup.co.uk/about-selsley/selsley-and-the-chartists/ Currently, the only commemoration in the Bell Inn, Selsley.
Polly Higgins (1968-2019)
Award-Winning Author, Barrister & Ecocide Law expert who lived and died in Stroud and buried in Slad. Polly stopped practising as a barrister to focus on advocating for an amendment to the Rome Statute to make ecocide an international crime. Although the law has yet to be recognised, as of June 2021 there is a fully worked legal definition of ecocide as a potential 5 th crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This definition is now available for consideration by states interested in progressing an amendment to the Rome Statute. The Earth Protector Town scheme is an initiative from the Stroud-based “Stop Ecocide” campaign that Polly founded: https://earthprotectorcommunities.net/towns/ . Stroud Town Council was the first town to declare itself an Earth Protector Town and is also publicly supporting the Stop Ecocide campaign. https://www.stopecocide.earth/faqs-ecocide-the-law https://pollyhiggins.com/

Edwin Budding and Laurie Lee were suggested multiple times in the survey. The Review Panel concluded that they are both well memorialised with Edwin Budding commemorated in The Museum in the Park and Stroud Brewery and Laurie Lee commemorated in The Museum in the Park, Stroud, Slad and Almunecar, Spain.

Table 2: Other suggestions with no direct connection with the Stroud district

Mary Seacole (1805-1881)
British-Jamaican nurse and business woman who set up the “British Hotel” behind the lines during the Crimean War. Seacole displayed “compassion, skills and bravery while nursing soldiers during the Crimean War”, through the use of herbal remedies. She was posthumously awarded the Jamaican Order of Merit in 1991. In 2004, she was voted the greatest Black Briton.
Paul Stephenson OBE (born 1937)
Community worker, activist and long-time campaigner for civil rights for the British African-Caribbean community in Bristol, England. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Stephenson_(civil_rights_campaigner)
James Baldwin (1924-1987)
Black American novelist, playwright, poet and activist
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)
English composer and conductor of mixed race birth.