



Preserving Diverse Industrial Heritage
COURSE

Level 1: Introduction Series (10 lessons)

Lesson 5

An Introduction to the
'DIGGING DEEP' Touring Exhibition

Overview

Lesson 5: An Introduction to the DIGGING DEEP Touring Exhibition

Topics explores: Exhibition production/ The role of a Curator / Museums & galleries / Preserving history / Cultural heritage /Diversity /Industry/ Coal mining / African Caribbean communities / Collections

Objectives / Learning Targets: *Learners will*

- Explore the DIGGING DEEP exhibition its originals, purpose
- Examine the role of an exhibition curator for diverse industrial heritage
- Consider the range of content within the exhibition
- Discuss how diverse and cultural heritage exhibitions can help educate, inform and inspire.

Subject Curriculum links: Art spaces, Heritage curatorial, History, Citizenship, Museum Studies, Management/ Business studies

Introduction

Digging Deep, Coal Miners of African Caribbean Heritage touring exhibition, presents unearthed stories and memories of former coal miners of Black and African-Caribbean heritage, within UK mining history. Visitors to the exhibition will be able to experience and learn about many different personal accounts of life in the mines for black miners, working in coalfields across the UK during the last 70 years.

The *Digging Deep* exhibition forms part of the Black Miners Museum, led by Nottingham News Centre CIC, which aimed to grow lasting partnerships with mining museums across the UK and overseas by celebrating and remembering the contributions made by coal miners of Black and African-Caribbean heritage and other diverse groups to mining as well as sharing collections, research and resources to educate and to inform.

Norma Gregory, historian and curator of *Digging Deep* said: *“In Britain’s post-war years when industry was heavily affected by labour shortages, lots of young men from the commonwealth and beyond, travelled to the UK seeking new employment opportunities and offering help to Britain’s deeply impacted by participation in*

continual wars and conflicts, at home and abroad.

Many black men found jobs in collieries up and down the country and soon settled into mining communities It was a tough job but they succeeded, through resilience and a commitment to help.

The Black Miners Museum and the Digging Deep Exhibition are about ensuring diverse mining stories are heard and shared, and their contribution to UK mining is remembered, for the future.”

Exhibition venues

The exhibition celebrates the contribution of miners with Black and African Caribbean-heritage across the UK mining industry and was display at the following venues between 2016-2021:

- National Coal Mining Museum for England, Yorkshire
- New Art Exchange (art gallery), Nottingham
- African Caribbean Nationals Artistic Centre (ACNA), Nottingham
- Woodhorn Mining Museum, Ashington Northumberland
- The Common Room of the Great North (formerly The Mining Institute), Newcastle Upon Tyne
- Bilsthorpe Mining Museum, Newark, Nottinghamshire
- Nottingham Caribbean Carnival, Nottingham
- Doncaster (African Caribbean Support Group)
- Leicester (West Indian Senior Citizen’s Project)

Exhibition content

The exhibition featured:

- *Eight unique information exhibition panels with embedded audio commentary documenting aspects of the personal journeys, experiences and narratives of former coal miners of African Caribbean heritage*

Exhibition panel themes are:

1. *Migration to the UK*
2. *Finding Work & Becoming a Miner*
3. *Teamwork & Camaraderie*
4. *Accidents, Injuries & Death at the Colliery*
5. *Miners’ Strikes & The Struggle for Industrial Survival*
6. *Legacy & Life after Mining*

- Also included are an *Introduction* panel and *Thank You* panel (8 panels total)
- *Coal mining artefacts and objects of interest*
- *Original coal artwork by Honey Williams, Winnie Kwok, Karen Thompson and other aspiring artists*
- *Screening of the Digging Deep documentary film (in the film booth)*
- *A collection of Black miners' portrait photography by David Severn, Richard Jones, Charles Sagoe and Chris Upton*
- *Archive and contemporary images and photographs*
- *Coal art jewellery and sculpture*
- *Cultural costume displays*
- *Poetry written especially for/about Black miners heritage by Delroy Brown, Arthur Cole and Munnya Usuwana.*

Visitors are able to understand more about the black miners' home lives (as many migrated the UK and left behind families and better employment chances in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia), seeing the kind of clothes they wore, and the ornaments and keepsakes they cherished that reminded them of home.

The Black Miners Museum has collated over 250+ known names of black miners and lists of the collieries they worked at. It has interviewed over 70+ surviving former miners, including Abiodun MacDonald Williams (aka Mac) who worked as the Colliery Ventilation Officer at Dawdon Colliery in County Durham for 11 years. His story, among many others, forms part of the exhibition.

Abiodun said: *"In 1961 I worked as an Assistant Ventilation Officer at Dawdon Colliery, Seaham, Durham, and I was encouraged to take further education. I went to Durham Technical College and qualified to be a Ventilation Officer. In 1968, I was appointed the Colliery Ventilation Officer."*

Rowan Brown, Chief Executive of Museums Northumberland, said: *"Woodhorn Museum is one of six UK museums partnered with the Black Miners Museum, helping to share diverse heritage."*

This fascinating exhibition, that we're presenting to honour Black History Month 2020, is an opportunity for people to learn about the experiences of former coal miners of African Caribbean heritage; some of whom lived and worked in the North East.

It is a great opportunity to collect visitors' stories and improve understanding about the migration stories and the diversity that existed in UK mining. Sadly, we have scant evidence of these stories at Museums Northumberland, so we are using this incredible opportunity to engage in dialogue with our communities and discover the hidden histories in our midst."

The exhibition intends to continue its tour overseas to countries such as Jamaica, Ghana and India where many of the Black/Asian /BAME miners originally migrated from, to ensure that their heritage is shared, celebrated and passed on through the generations.

Learning Activities

Time	Activities	Key words / Phrases
5 mins	<p><i>Ice-breaker/ Starter</i></p> <p>Ask the group questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the purpose of an exhibition /touring exhibition • Write a description (3 sentences) of your most memorable permanent exhibition /touring exhibition you have visited • Consider why preserving migration stories/histories are relevant today 	<p>Exhibition</p> <p>Touring exhibition</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Preservation</p> <p>Migration histories</p>
45 mins	<p><i>Main</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the role and duties of an exhibition curator • Discuss some of the challenges and obstacles there might be when creating / designing an exhibition • Write an exhibition review and submit to a newspaper/magazine/website blog for potential publication • Write a set of interview questions for an exhibition museum curator including questions on exhibition layout, public access/accessibility to the exhibition, digital technologies and museums, audience engagement activities etc. • Using the quotes provided in the Introduction (pages 2-5) summarise the main points • Think about gallery /art/ heritage exhibitions of the future. What would they be like? What would/ should they showcase and why? 	<p>Curator</p> <p>Exhibition design</p> <p>Exhibition content</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Publishing</p>
5 mins	<p><i>Plenary</i></p> <p>Reflection questioning</p> <p>Describe what you have learnt today – write (or draw a related object) on a post-it note.</p> <p>Gather responses and share.</p>	<p>Reflection</p>

Ideas for differentiation

a. Visual Learners

Include images

b. Auditory Learners

Include recordings/podcasts/music

c. Kinesthetic Learners

Include objects to handle

d. ESL Students

Include vocabulary translations and images of key objects/words

e. At-risk Students

Be aware of discussing subjects/topics that may trigger negative responses or behaviours

f. Advanced Learners

Include extension activities i.e. further questions, questions that encourage analysis and evaluation, independent research topics

Assessment

Informal, direct questions, self-reflection

Materials & Resources

Computer / Smart phone

Paper pen/pencil

Media Links

- Woodhorn Mining Museum, Digging Deep Curator's Walk & Talk video <https://vimeo.com/467420404/b9b76d9b9b>
- Black Miners Museum Galley <https://www.blackcoalminers.com/BMMPgallery> and at <https://www.blackcoalminers.com/BMMP-Exhibitions>
- Kirklees TV video of Digging Deep touring exhibition (December 2019) https://youtu.be/sgC_MFy2XsQ
- Kirklees TV interview Digging Deep exhibition with the Jamaica High Commissioner visit to the Digging Deep exhibition (March 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRfoE4nNHnc&t=17s>
- ITV Tyne Tees, October 2020 <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2020-10-06/new-exhibition-running-during-black-history-month-at-woodhorn-museum-to-celebrate-black-and-african-caribbean-miners>
- ITV Look North, October 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xys1sLGt5Cg&feature=youtu.be>

Further reading/study

- The Curator's Handbook" Museums, Commercial Galleries, Independent Spaces by Adrian George (2015)
- The New Curator: Exhibiting Architecture and Design by Fleur Watson (2021)
- Curatorial Challenges: interdisciplinary Perspectives on Contemporary Curating by Malene Vest Hanson, Anne Folke Henningsen, et al (2020)

Global connection opportunities & places to visit (online or physical)

- View Black Miners Museum <https://www.blackcoalminers.com/BMMP-Exhibitions> catalogue at <https://www.blackcoalminers.com/BMMP-Resource-catalogue>
- Explore a digital map with locations of partner mining museums in the UK now hosting aspects of the Black Miners Museum content and diverse heritage <https://viewer.mapme.com/black-miners-museum-project>
- Visit a wide range of virtual exhibition tours and art collections at Google Arts and Culture <https://artsandculture.google.com>

Images for educational use/ discussion



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Digging Deep Exhibition poster



DIGGING DEEP
MINERS OF
AFRICAN
CARIBBEAN
HERITAGE
EXHIBITION

21 SEP 2019-
8 MAR 2020
10AM-5PM
FREE ENTRY
(£5 DONATION WELCOMED
FOR UNDERGROUND TOUR)

NATIONAL COAL MINING MUSEUM
Main Gallery, Caphouse Colliery, New Rd., Overton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF4 4RH. Tel. 01924 848806
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     www.ncm.org.uk

TEACHER NOTES